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New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Item 9 of the provisional agenda *(continued)*

General debate

The President: Before calling on the first speaker, I wish to thank the Government of Iceland for the gift of this beautiful gavel, made from the wood of a pear tree.

I call on Her Excellency Ms. Ursula Plassnik, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Ms. Plassnik (Austria): We Austrians unfailingly keep the United Nations in high esteem. Let me try to explain why.

Austria became a Member of the United Nations in December 1955. That was only half a year after our full sovereignty had been restored through a treaty concluded with the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France, called the Austrian State Treaty.

Fifty years ago, becoming part of the family of nations was a powerful motive for us. We could build on your trust. We could rely on your help. We later solved complex problems such as the question of Südtirol with you, our partners in the United Nations. And we have since been eager to return to others in need the help extended to us.

More than anything else, it is our own experience that nurtures our confidence in the potential of the United Nations as a promoter of peace and a beacon of hope for so many who face the dire challenges and threats to our societies — be they armed conflict or hunger, terrorism or environmental disaster. We need the United Nations to be relevant, responsive and reliable — today and in the years to come.

Mr. Win (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The reform process initiated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and reflected in the World Summit Outcome document will further enhance that potential. We may not have achieved all we were striving for, but let us not disregard the progress made, for it will — if acted upon — make a difference to people in need of our support, in need of our protection.

Promoting peace is the United Nations very raison d'être. Since Austria joined the United Nations, some 54,000 Austrian peacekeepers have participated in more than 50 missions all over the world. Currently, 1,200 of them are deployed in missions from Kosovo to the Golan Heights and from Afghanistan to Aceh and the Sudan.

It is also in the light of their practical experience that we welcome the new peacebuilding commission. It will provide specific support to people having to cope with the manifold challenges along the path from war to real peace. I wish to say one word on women in that context. Creating confidence in post-conflict societies requires the active participation and deliberate involvement of women. They must become key partners in our peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

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The European Union, as the major donor to post-conflict reconstruction and development, will substantially contribute to the peacebuilding commission's work. It should therefore have a place in the commission.

For us and many people all over the world, the most serious failure of the present reform effort was the lack of agreement on effective and verifiable measures against nuclear proliferation and for disarmament. We must strengthen the multilateral verification mechanisms and enable the International Atomic Energy Agency to make best use of its capacity. We must not abandon our efforts to find common ground on those most challenging tasks.

In this vulnerable world, we need to foster trust between communities and peoples and help to identify shared values. Austria thus strongly supports every form of dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures. In particular, we need to reach out to the Islamic world, both internationally and inside our societies. As a concrete contribution, Austria will host an international conference in November on Islam in a pluralistic world.

Anywhere in the world, individuals will be able to live and unfold in larger freedom only when their fundamental needs of development, security and human rights are met. We need to address those requirements in a comprehensive and integrated manner. We are grateful to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who so remarkably raised awareness on that matter.

The Millennium Development Goals contain specific promises of solidarity. Austria therefore welcomes our continued common commitments, in particular to poverty eradication and the global partnership for sustainable development. In contributing to the funding effort, we will raise our official development assistance to 0.51 per cent of our gross national income by 2010.

Promoting human security is an ever more demanding task. Our decisions on the "responsibility to protect" are a courageous step forward in international relations, but more importantly, they are an offer of hope to those most vulnerable to genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We must not let them down. In the words of Simon Wiesenthal, who sadly passed away last night in Vienna, what connects 2,000 years of genocide is "too much power in too few hands". Ten years ago, at this Assembly, Simon Wiesenthal proposed to organize a worldwide conference aimed at reducing hate. He said that "technology without hatred can be so beneficial for mankind, but in conjunction with hatred it leads to disaster" (*A/50/PV.66*, p. 9). Reality has since illustrated the profound relevance of that proposal.

In our globalized world, the concept of neighbourhood has taken on a new meaning. In the eye of disaster, we are all neighbours, no matter how far or close. As the tsunami and recent hurricanes have taught us, there is an emerging sense of shared destiny and responsibility no longer limited to a geographical vicinity. Let me on this occasion express our gratitude to all those private donors who set a mark of living solidarity.

Austria's clear commitment to effective multilateralism is at the very heart of our work in the European Union and the United Nations. It is in that spirit that we are a candidate for Security Council membership in 2009-2010.

Promoting the rule of law is the key to an environment of trust within our societies. It enables individuals to enjoy a self-determined life. For many, the rule of law is synonymous with normality and predictability in their private and professional lives. We therefore welcome the proposed establishment of a rule of law assistance unit in the Secretariat to advise States in their efforts towards the rule of law.

One of the main achievements of the summit was the decision to establish a human rights council, even if the concrete set-up remains to be defined. In our view, we need a standing body with the ability to address urgent human rights issues swiftly and efficiently. That is no mere management question. What is at stake is the new Council's capacity to make a difference for those in need. It is now crucial that negotiations start without delay in order to seize the momentum of the reform.

Human rights are also a matter of education. In the framework of the Human Security Network, Austria has therefore developed a human rights manual that has been translated into all United Nations languages. It is used in training programmes in Austria and abroad and we encourage our partners to make use of that instrument.

Strengthening human rights and the rule of law will increase security. That is true for societies at large, but it is also true for the smallest communities and

individual households. Full respect for the rights of women and children is therefore indispensable in the world of increased justice and equality we strive for. Too many women are victims of violence. We therefore welcome the study currently being prepared by the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women.

Much remains to be done. The Doha Development Round has to promote improved market access. In our efforts to protect the environment, we have to enhance the use of renewable energy and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. We also need to finalize the comprehensive anti-terrorism convention, as agreed at the world summit, and adopt and implement the counter-terrorism strategy proposed by the Secretary-General.

Real freedom is within reach if we, through the United Nations, join our forces to promote peace, security and justice — not only freedom from want and freedom from fear, but eventually freedom to live in dignity for both women and men across the globe.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Benaissa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Mr. Benaissa (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to begin by congratulating Ambassador Jan Eliasson, on behalf of the delegation of Morocco, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this historic session and by wishing him success in his noble task. I should also like to express to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of the brotherly State of Gabon, our sincere thanks and profound appreciation for his efforts as President of the General Assembly during the fifty-ninth session and for the patience and dedication that he showed in his excellent conduct of the preparatory work for the High-level Plenary Meeting, thereby ensuring the success of the summit, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for his commendable efforts to improve the structure of the Organization and enhance its working methods and effectiveness.

Last week's summit meeting was a key event in the history of the United Nations and marked a turning point in the Organization's activities, not just because of the impressive number of very distinguished participants, but also because of the importance of the outcome document (resolution 60/1), which was adopted as a result of the contribution of all members.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco supports the proposals submitted by the Secretary-General with a view to ensuring follow-up of the outcomes of the various international conferences on development issues. Although it failed to meet our expectations, the summit outcome document nevertheless reiterated our international commitments; it paves the way for strengthening the role and effectiveness of the Organization and adapting it to meet the new challenges posed by global developments.

The Kingdom of Morocco would like to reaffirm its readiness to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the summit and to participate in the international effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). My country has undertaken a number of proactive national initiatives relating to ensuring respect for human rights and the establishment of an integrated and modern society in which women play an active role in development. Many of these are set out in the National Initiative for Human Development, announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI on 18 May. That initiative reflects Morocco's willingness to create a development model based on a successful association of modernity, democratization and economic openness. That model is also aimed at achieving a sustained improvement in our human development index, within a spirit of collective participation, solidarity, equal opportunity, the dissemination of knowledge and the provision of basic social services.

The end of the era of ideological division and the rise of a new world order has called the attention of the international community to new challenges posed by the scourges of terrorism, hunger, poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and pandemic disease, as well as the increasing number of refugees fleeing from the disasters of war and destruction and the growing number of ethnic, tribal and religious conflicts and separatist trends.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, the international community has grown increasingly aware of the threat of terrorism and of the need to combat it by all available means and to address its root causes and underlying motives.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which has itself been subjected to the scourge of terrorism, has participated

in efforts to combat it through the elaboration of legal instruments and practical arrangements at the national, regional and international levels. During this session, the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to contribute to efforts to adopt a comprehensive convention against terrorism, thereby complementing its participation in the elaboration of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

As for development challenges, our African continent is the only region that will not be able to achieve the MDGs within the specified time frame unless the international community provides full support. In this regard, African countries acknowledge that they must rely, first and foremost, on their own human and material resources. However, Africa's economic take-off can be achieved only through an efficient and realistic partnership involving all the parties concerned, including donor countries and international and regional organizations. That partnership must be founded on an integrated and sustained process that benefits the existing North-South and South-South cooperation mechanisms.

Convinced of the necessity to collectively combat the ills that are besetting our African continent, Morocco has always taken the lead in supporting and encouraging any initiative aimed at freeing the African peoples from their stark predicament. Thus, on more than one occasion, the Kingdom of Morocco has voiced full support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development as an integrated and comprehensive action plan designed to solve the persistent economic and social problems that have plagued our continent since the era of independence.

On the other hand, Morocco has always shown its readiness to contribute to conflict resolution in Africa by bringing together belligerent parties and by strengthening the ties of brotherhood and good neighbourliness among the States of western Africa, as well as through the participation of the Royal Armed Forces of Morocco in peacekeeping operations conducted under the auspices of the United Nations in Africa.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the decision by the Group of Eight to cancel the debt of least developed African countries. I would also like to recall that His Majesty King Mohammed VI was among the first to initiate such a move. During the first European Union-Africa Summit, which was held in Cairo, His Majesty announced the cancellation of the debt of least developed African countries, opened Morocco's market to their products and granted them customs exemptions.

The success of Africa's economic take-off remains contingent upon the success of regional integration throughout the continent. The Kingdom of Morocco therefore believes that the reactivation of the Maghreb Arab Union is a political imperative, an economic necessity and a historical reality that responds to the aspirations of the peoples of the region and reflects the expectations of our partners, especially those in the Mediterranean region, with whom we are striving to reinforce our partnership as we prepare to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona process.

For those reasons, Morocco is working to reactivate the Union's machinery and to remove any obstacles that might hinder its relaunching on a sound, constructive and meaningful basis. In this context, Morocco would like to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to working closely with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy and Special Representative, as well as with all parties concerned, in order to break the current stalemate and reach a negotiated political solution to the artificial conflict with respect to the Moroccan Sahara. Because of its geostrategic nature, that conflict between two brotherly neighbouring countries, Morocco and Algeria, requires the involvement of our brethren in Algeria in a serious and constructive dialogue with a view to putting an end to it once and for all.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his most recent Throne Day speech, affirmed Morocco's willingness "to engage in serious negotiations with a view to reaching a final solution that would win United Nations support and grant the inhabitants of the southern provinces autonomy within the sovereignty of the Kingdom and its territorial and national integrity".

Pending the involvement of all parties in that negotiation process, it remains urgent to follow up on the humanitarian aspect of the problem by disclosing the fate of all Moroccan missing persons and prisoners. The International Committee of the Red Cross was unable to establish contacts with those persons or to discover their place of detention. In addition, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should be allowed to undertake a fair and

free census of Moroccan citizens being held in the Tindouf camps in Algeria, who should be freed and allowed to exercise their right to return to their homeland.

The Arab region, which continues to experience recurrent crises as well as new ones equally violent and fierce, looks to the Organization and to other international and regional actors for their assistance in solving them. In that regard, we hope that the ray of optimism that shone recently in the Middle East, prompting us to engage in cautious optimism, will be supported by serious and brave measures that will revive the peace process and put it back on track. The Kingdom of Morocco welcomed the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and considers it an important and positive decision on the path towards full implementation of the road map.

Morocco, which has always striven tirelessly and effectively to keep open the channels of communication and dialogue among the peoples of the Middle East, reaffirms its active commitment to promoting a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict that will lead to the establishment of a final, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East through the reactivation of the road map, the guaranteed establishment of a free Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital, and the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Syrian and Lebanese territories.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, has reaffirmed his resolve to continue to actively pursue and support all peace efforts and to work to preserve the Arab and Islamic identity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its status as a place of coexistence and tolerance among the three revealed religions.

With regard to the situation in the brotherly State of Iraq, the Kingdom of Morocco, although appreciating highly the continuous and intensive efforts to re-establish stability, peace and reconstruction in Iraq, and although following the recent political progress with great interest, affirms that the participation of all constituents of Iraqi society is needed to build the democratic institutions of the new Iraqi State and to preserve its national unity. Moreover, the international community must help the Iraqi people to overcome the ongoing crisis by creating the conditions necessary for peace and stability.

Reforming the United Nations to enable it to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, restructuring its organs and bodies and updating their mandates will require not only that its working methods be improved, but also that the Organization regain its natural and leading role as a framework for constructive dialogue and as a forum for creative interaction among the various intellectual currents and religious and cultural trends.

In that context, Morocco commends the Secretary-General for his decision to appoint a High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations and to establish a new cultural world order based on tolerance and coexistence. We support diversity and unity of visions and goals as contributions to meeting the challenges of the new millennium.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. David Oddsson, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Iceland.

Mr. Oddsson (Iceland): I would like to join those who have expressed thanks to the Secretary-General for his efforts in recent years to address the very serious issues facing the international community.

Iceland had high expectations for the results of last week's summit, which were met only partly in its outcome document (*resolution 60/1*). Much further work is needed. While most of the key values in the Charter were reaffirmed, it is Iceland's view that human rights and the accountability of States to their citizens were insufficiently dealt with.

The United Nations Charter guarantees equality among nations and provides a basis on which they can live together as good neighbours. However, the Charter not only addresses how relations should be conducted among Governments; it also specifies how Governments should conduct themselves towards their peoples. That is what the Secretary-General has called the accountability of States to their citizens.

Iceland supports the Secretary-General's strong statement on the responsibility borne by the international community in cases of massive human rights abuses or genocide. The United Nations has made significant progress in that respect by recognizing the existence of an international responsibility to protect. The Security Council and other institutions have thus been given a clear mandate — indeed, a clear duty — to act where crimes against humanity are committed.

Democracy and respect for universal human rights are of central importance to security and development. Iceland supports the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund and will contribute to it. We are also strongly in favour of reforming the present human rights machinery. The Commission on Human Rights is dysfunctional and devoid of credibility; deliberations on human rights have suffered accordingly. Moreover, the credibility of the entire United Nations Organization is threatened. There now exists a summit mandate to establish a Human Rights Council, which will be responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. For Iceland, the ideal Human Rights Council would be smaller than the Commission and would be in session all year so that it could respond to emergencies. The composition of the new Council will be fundamental to its effectiveness. It must not include major human rights abusers.

At the summit, Member States committed themselves to making every possible effort to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Such a convention must unconditionally condemn terrorism. If it is to be fully effective, it must include a legal definition of terrorist acts.

Unfortunately, the threat of terrorism, combined with that of weapons of mass destruction, is not dealt with in the outcome document, which fails to address the proliferation of such weapons. Proliferation is a profound danger which the United Nations cannot ignore but must confront in a decisive manner.

Iceland welcomes the emphasis placed by the document on investing in prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We welcome in particular the proposal to create a Peacebuilding Commission and a Support Office within the Secretariat. Iceland is willing to take part, along with other Member States, in ensuring that both are up and running by the end of the year.

I must express disappointment at the fact that the group of four proposal for reforming the Security Council has not yet received the support it deserves. While not perfect, it remains the most practical basis for reforming the Council. That approach therefore continues to have Iceland's firm support. The Council must reflect the world as it is and be representative. Iceland has previously, in this very forum, expressed its interest in participating actively in the work of the Council in the years 2009 and 2010.

The Millennium Declaration provides a platform to address poverty in the developing countries. Developed countries have committed themselves to providing the necessary support in the form of official development assistance. It is no less important for developing countries to create a transparent and accountable environment that respects good governance and the rule of law, in order to attract domestic and foreign investment, which fosters the growth of a vibrant private sector. It is also important for developed and developing countries to ensure a successful outcome of the current World Trade Organization negotiations.

The Government of Iceland has acknowledged the great challenge posed by the Millennium Development Goals. Accordingly, it will continue substantially to increase Iceland's official development assistance in the coming years.

Iceland is committed to reform of the United Nations and to finding common ways of dealing with threats to international security. The outcome document has serious shortcomings, and the risk remains that the United Nations could be further weakened. Member States must ensure that the process continues and that it will, in the coming weeks and months, deliver on the fundamental issues at hand in the interests of peace and prosperity in the world.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Ilinka Mitreva, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mrs. Mitreva (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): It gives me great pleasure to address this forum and to share with the General Assembly my Government's views on issues of the highest relevance to our Organization. But first of all, let me express our solidarity and heartfelt condolences in connection with the loss of life and the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina in our host country — the United States of America.

I wish to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden on his election to the post of President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I am sure that under his able guidance we will make substantial progress in implementing the decisions adopted just a few days ago by the heads of State. At the same time,

let me congratulate Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for a job well done. I would like also to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his skilful leadership of the Organization in what has turned out to be a very difficult year.

The High-level Meeting and the outcome document reaffirmed our commitment to the core values and principles of the United Nations Charter and to effective multilateralism, and it identified areas for future action. The summit has also provided us with a unique opportunity to explore new ways to adapt the United Nations to new realities.

The Organization was created 60 years ago. However, the vision of its founders — to bring about a more secure, democratic and developed world — needs to be pursued more vigorously today. As a wise man once said, we should be both speakers of words and doers of deeds. I am happy that we all agree that we need a reformed, more effective and more credible United Nations.

The high-level segment made a fair assessment of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

The assessment by the world leaders was both realistic and upbeat. They boldly assessed the status of current and longstanding problems — extreme poverty, hunger, disease, the HIV pandemic, child mortality, environmental degradation, lack of good governance, disregard for human rights and the rule of law — and showed strength and resolve in defining steps and actions to be taken or reinforced in order to meet our targets, and they were cautiously optimistic about the deadlines to be met.

Today we live in a world in which our peoples, nations and Governments depend on each other. We must recognize that in this interdependent and globalized world, all threats are threats to us all. No one is immune to them, nor does any single State have a cure.

But how should we proceed? I believe that many of us share the view that, in fact, we already have a multiplicity of documents and agreed positions, as well as many political commitments and adopted declarations. Much has been achieved by the United Nations, and we are proud of that. My own country has also benefited from United Nations efforts — the United Nations engagement in the first-ever preventive deployment mission. That was a good example of the effectiveness of joint efforts and cooperation.

However, turning to the main questions, we have found that we are still lagging behind on some of the issues to which have so strongly committed ourselves. One of the avenues for moving forward involves implementation and visibility. These are not new words. Many promising United Nations ideas and projects have been sidelined due to inappropriate follow-up and inadequate implementation measures, or simply due to insufficient support and funding by the Member States. We should avoid such pitfalls.

The sooner the effects of the implementation of our decisions become visible, the greater international public support will be, and the greater the chances of creating a better world for us and for generations to come. But we should not shy away from sharing that responsibility with all those who can assist us, with those who have the capacity to help promote and implement our goals. There are many positive examples in recent memory, beginning with the greater involvement of regional organizations, the civil sector, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and so on. Let us make greater use of them. We can only benefit.

On this occasion, I will not dwell in detail on the processes of United Nations reform and the strengthening of the Organization. President Crvenkovski elaborated Macedonia's position on those issues here last week.

Macedonia also aligns itself with the European Union statement. Nevertheless, allow me to say a few words on some current United Nations reform issues of particular interest to us. Macedonia supports the view that human rights, the rule of law and democracy should be given a prominent place in the United Nations reform proposals. Freedom from fear could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights, as former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld put it.

It has long been a strong position of my country that respect for those principles, coupled with development, is the best conflict-prevention measure and a vital precondition for peace and prosperity. For that reason, we see great merit in establishing a

peacebuilding commission. I trust that a balanced gender representation on the commission will only lead to its better functioning and give added value to peacebuilding. Furthermore, the establishment of the human rights council must be seen as a powerful tool to regain the values and principles originally envisaged by the creation of the United Nations.

We are very satisfied that the concept of "responsibility to protect" has found its well-deserved place for the first time in a United Nations document and welcome its endorsement.

The democracy fund is a noble idea which deserves our full creative engagement.

Terrorism has turned into the plague of modern times. Since the last session of the General Assembly, many atrocious terrorist attacks have taken place throughout the world. Our firm commitment to fighting terrorism should engender more joint activities and actions. Our struggle must be based on full respect for human rights because it is human rights that terrorists are afraid of and seek to undermine. We need further consolidation of the global anti-terrorist coalition and strengthened cooperation with regional organizations.

The United Nations is at the core of activities in the area of counter-terrorism. The Republic of Macedonia supports the elaboration of the United Nations comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, as outlined by the Secretary-General in Madrid. I would like to appeal to the Member States to agree on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. This year, we took a significant step by adopting the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which we signed on 16 September. The victims of recent acts of terrorism painfully remind us to move forward.

From the very beginning, the Republic of Macedonia has been a part of the international anti-terrorist coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Peace and democracy-building in those two countries remain among the key challenges to the international community and to the Iraqis and Afghans themselves. I would like once again to reiterate our support for their efforts to rebuild their countries and to create better lives for their people.

Today, my country, Macedonia, is a functional, multi-ethnic democracy. Over the past three years, we have launched and carried out a large number of reform projects. Our hard work has brought us closer to the Euro-Atlantic structures. We have developed genuine partnerships with the Union and the alliance. We expect the European Commission to give a positive evaluation of our achievements and Macedonia to be granted the status of candidate at the December 2005 summit. I firmly believe that the time has come for our European perspective to turn into a European reality. As for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, we expect the invitation to join at the next enlargement summit.

The Government has recently announced its economic programme, primarily aimed at increasing economic growth and reducing unemployment. At the same time, it has intensified the development of a climate favourable to foreign investment and safe business conduct. As a critical complement to economic reforms, Macedonia is also focused on reform of the judiciary and the fight against organized crime and corruption. We have set a goal to do better. The reforms are not easy, but we are firm in our resolve to implement them.

Regional cooperation has become a major characteristic of the foreign policies of all countries in South-East Europe. We have been patiently building a new spirit of cooperation, while at the same time learning the true meaning of developing relations based on mutual trust and solidarity. That includes our bilateral relations, as well as a large number of regional initiatives. Recognizing that reality and the need to cooperate and to build good-neighbourly relations and mutual confidence was not an easy undertaking, but it is the only way ahead. We take pride in seeing the region move forward. The Republic of Macedonia will continue even more vigorously to pursue such policy. There is no alternative to dialogue and all outstanding regional issues should be resolved in that manner.

In closing, I am confident that our deliberations will contribute to better and faster follow-up of the commitments agreed at the High-level Plenary Meeting. I believe that we can soon come up with implementation mechanisms that will give life to what was conceived by our leaders. There were many debates, some of them very contradictory, showing how different we are. But diversity should not prevent us from having a common vision and goals for a better future. That is why we are here at the United Nations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Ould Sid'Ahmed, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania.

Mr. Ahmed (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I am pleased to extend to Mr. Eliasson my wholehearted congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We are convinced that his wealth of experience and immense talent will allow him to address the international and regional issues on our agenda with confidence and ensure the success of this session, which coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization.

I cannot fail to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, for his gifted and patient performance at the helm of the General Assembly at the fifty-ninth session and for his tireless efforts to establish the appropriate conditions for the holding of the session and the High-level Plenary Meeting that preceded it.

I should also like warmly to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his colleagues on their intense and consistent mediation and efforts to ensure the convening of this session and the achievement of the Organization's lofty objectives.

I also hail the major efforts made during the intersessional period at the high-level dialogue begun in New York in late June on financing for development and at the Economic and Social Council session on national achievements and steps towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and to implement the outcomes of the international conferences held from 1992 to 2002.

Attaining the objectives of development, security and stability hinges on how effectively we deal with the issues of violence and terrorism. The global nature of the phenomenon of terrorism requires that the question be dealt with in a global manner, through the complementarity of the cultures of nations and a rejection of confrontation and conflict. It is also important not to forget the considerable growth gap that exists between poor and rich countries, particularly since the social, scientific and technical lag is one of the major causes of tension and one that nurtures terrorism and violence in the world. In Mauritania, we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and we view it as a phenomenon that is alien to our society and our Islamic values of tolerance. We reject violence and extremism and call for mutual understanding, dialogue and tolerance.

It is clear that we must quickly begin a political dialogue, which is the only means to end the conflict in the Middle East and to restore calm there. In this context, my country believes that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a few cities of the West Bank constitutes an important step towards the implementation of the road map and the Arab peace initiatives. Through those initiatives Arab States have proposed to Israel a comprehensive peace and normal relations in exchange for total withdrawal from all Palestinian territories and from Syrian and Lebanese territories, a return to the 4 June 1967 borders, the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a negotiated, just settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees.

We are following with interest the developments of the situation in Iraq and are anxious to preserve Iraq's territorial unity, the unity of its people, its sovereignty, independence and non-interference in its internal problems, in order to overcome the problems and ensure security, stability and the re-construction of the State, while supporting the transitional Government.

We are following with equal interest the development of the situation in the Sudan, and we give our blessing to the Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. We support the commendable efforts of the Sudanese Government, in coordination with the African Union, the Arab League and the United Nations, to tackle humanitarian, security and political questions related to the Darfur crisis.

Regarding Western Sahara, Mauritania supports the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General to find a definitive solution to assure stability in the region, a solution that has the support of all parties.

Mauritania today is on the eve of an era that began with an initiative taken by the Military Council for Justice and Democracy on 3 August 2005, which was hailed by the entire Mauritanian people. It put an end to totalitarian practices that caused suffering and led to dangerous derailments that threatened the future of the country over the last two decades. This initiative rests on the commitment of the Council to the Mauritanian people to create the right conditions for the emergence of an honest and transparent democracy and to allow civil society and all legal political actors

to participate in this endeavour with full freedom. The Military Council will not exercise its powers beyond the period necessary to prepare for and set up genuine democratic institutions, and that period will not extend beyond two years. The Military Council for Justice and Democracy solemnly reaffirms respect for all of Mauritania's international commitments and instruments.

In crystallizing this initiative, the Military Council for Justice and Democracy has defined the priorities of the transitional Government. It has established three ministerial committees entrusted with the task of defining the modalities to guarantee proper elections, working together with political parties and civil society organizations to establish an equitable legal system, in consultation with the national bar association. The aim of these efforts is to propose all measures necessary for the emergence of a genuine system of good governance, in which the private sector and civil society participate.

In order to ensure justice and national reconciliation and to enable all people to participate freely and actively in political life, a comprehensive and absolute amnesty was proclaimed on 2 September 2005 for all Mauritanians condemned for political crimes and misdemeanours. At this point in time, no Mauritanian is being prosecuted for any political crime domestically or abroad.

For the first time, the mass media are open to all political parties and civil society institutions. A constitutional law was enacted prohibiting the President and members of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy, the Prime Minister and members of the Transitional Government from standing in the forthcoming elections or supporting any political candidate or party. An independent elections committee was formed to supervise elections, seeking help from any nation willing to help. It is in this context that Mauritania presented a memorandum to the United Nations regarding provision of assistance to international observers invited by the Mauritanian Government to provide technical and logistical assistance for the elections. This is with a view to conducting a constitutional referendum, which will be organized by July 2006 at the latest, as well as legislative and presidential elections to be held before 6 August 2007. The referendums and elections would be held in accordance with the commitment made by the Military Council for Justice and Democracy with the Transitional Government, in order to provide the appropriate conditions for a transparent and open democracy and to facilitate the establishment of institutions that will be truly representative and diverse.

Mauritania is eager to contribute to the development of cooperation and solidarity in the regional context. It is in that context that we would like to reaffirm our total support for the Arab Maghreb, which remains an incontrovertible strategic choice and an ambitious project for the people of the region in their aspirations to greater complementarity and solidarity.

With regard to the African continent, we would like to reiterate the importance we attach to our friendship and brotherly relations with all countries of the continent. We would like to further strengthen cultural dialogue, communications and relations, which we have pledged to do within the Five-plus-Five framework and the Barcelona process, the tenth anniversary of which we shall celebrate this year.

Given ongoing world changes, we would like to see the role and functions of the General Assembly enhanced and to see its decisions implemented. That holds true for other organs of the United Nations, in particular the Economic and Social Council.

The Security Council needs to be strengthened, and to be made more representative by including members from Africa, Latin America and other regional groups, such as the Arab Group, as well as other industrialized States such as Germany and Japan. Finally, the working methods of the Council and its performance need to be improved so that it can achieve its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Per Stig Moeller, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Moeller (Denmark): The conclusion of the summit last week marks the beginning of another busy year for the General Assembly and the Member States of the United Nations. The summit gave us an ambitious new agenda and in the spirit of multilateralism we must do our utmost to meet the goals it set out. Denmark intends to pull up its sleeves and contribute to that undertaking and I encourage others to do the same.

In his impressive report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), issued in March, the Secretary-General

gave us the best possible basis for the necessary and profound changes the Organization must undergo. The spirit of the new interrelated reform agenda is captured in the report's observation that "... we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights" (*A/59/2005, para. 17*). With those words the Secretary-General identified the three pillars of the United Nations in the twenty-first century: security, development and human rights.

The custodian of international peace and security is the Security Council. In October last year, members elected Denmark as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We have — to the best of our abilities — sought to translate the trust bestowed upon us into action: Denmark holds the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee; we work for improvements in United Nations peacekeeping by pursuing a holistic approach to the concept of peacebuilding; we advocate better protection for women and children; and we support a stronger emphasis on the rule of law and the need to end impunity.

The Security Council must clearly demonstrate its will to enforce the decisions taken by it. If not, the Council loses credibility, and the international community loses its only forceful multilateral instrument.

Targeted sanctions are an important instrument for achieving compliance with decisions of the Security Council and for compliance with international law in general. We must continue an intensive dialogue on how best to implement sanctions and how to follow them up to ensure the desired outcome. The approach must always include both carrot and stick — incentive and punishment.

The United Nations plays a central role in efforts to fight terrorism and we support the Secretary-General's outline for a comprehensive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy that will engage the whole United Nations system in the fight against terrorism. We will take an active part in its further development and implementation. We also welcome the new resolution on terrorism adopted by the Security Council (Security Council resolution 1624 (2005)).

As Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Denmark regards itself as having a special responsibility in that field. We have given priority to enhanced cooperation between the relevant Security Council subsidiary organs dealing with terrorism, and we will continue to do so. We have also engaged in dialogue with parts of the United Nations family not previously involved in the fight against terrorism. The aim of that dialogue is to identify their role in helping States that would like to engage more actively in the fight against terrorism, but which lack the capacity to do so. We will continue our efforts to strengthen the synergies between relevant United Nations actors to further strengthen the counter-terrorism capability of the United Nations.

Our efforts to fight international terrorism must be carried out with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is imperative to strike the right balance between, on the one hand, preventive and swift action against terrorists and, on the other, adequate safeguards for the individual, and not least for those who have been unjustly listed.

The summit has sent an important political message about the dedication of Member States to fight terrorism, even if it was not as strong as we had wished. We must now make every effort, at the present session of the General Assembly, to reach agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Any further stalling on that important issue will send the wrong message.

The single most frightening scenario today is that of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of non-State actors. Such possession constitutes a danger to civilizations all over the world. Nobody can claim to be safe today. Everybody must acknowledge the danger and refrain from activities that increase the threat. We need a concerted effort in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. The failure of the non-proliferation treaty review conference, held this spring, to produce an agreement and the lack of new commitments at the summit must not lead to resignation, but rather must spur us to redouble our efforts.

At the same, time concerted action is needed to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, which kill 500,000 people every year. Arms transfers must be transparent. Denmark strongly supports the adoption of an international arms trade treaty. Such a treaty must be legally binding, include all weapons and be United Nations-based.

Denmark favours a holistic approach to peacebuilding. We believe the United Nations is well

placed to coordinate international efforts to assist countries emerging from conflict. Therefore, we have actively supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. This new body will add value to the work done by various actors including the funds and programmes of the United Nations. I urge Member States to ensure that the Commission will be operational by the end of the year, as requested by the summit.

It is a fact that conflicts in Africa continue to loom large on the Security Council's agenda. The slogan "African solutions to African problems" must not lead to indifference from donors. We must increase our assistance to regional capacity-building and, at the same time, be prepared to provide the necessary human and financial resources for conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. To that end, Denmark is sponsoring a major capacity-building programme in Africa in close cooperation with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

The summit confirmed our dedication to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals through considerable donor commitments, as well as the need to pay particular attention to countries in Africa that are lagging far behind. Denmark will remain well above the 0.7 aid target and urges all donor countries to implement the goals decided by the summit. The responsibility, however, does not rest with donor countries alone. In order to ensure sustainable development the world's poor countries must prioritize human development and respect for human rights, tackle national inequalities and curb corruption.

In a closely interrelated and interdependent world, our collective security and prosperity depend critically on the success of our fight against poverty. We must continue to look for new ways to enforce international law and protect those in need. Promoting the rule of law must be one of the main objectives when devising peacebuilding strategies in Africa and when addressing democratic deficits elsewhere.

The President returned to the Chair.

Indeed, prosperity and security will occur only if and when we decide to respect and promote human rights. It is our obligation to address and to act on human rights violations wherever they occur, and we must do so in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. It is our common duty to measure every Member State's actual performance against the universal standards of human rights, including when that means naming and even shaming. Otherwise, we risk undermining important norms of human decency and behaviour. All Governments must remember that they are in office for the people and not for themselves.

For those reasons, Denmark strongly supports the establishment of the Human Rights Council as a permanent, principal organ of the United Nations, as well as the overall strengthening of the entire United Nations human rights machinery, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Sixty years after the creation of this Organization, we should give human rights the necessary attention and priority in order to meet the expectations of the people, whom we are meant to serve.

The grave crimes against humanity committed in Darfur serve as a reminder to the international community. Impunity is unacceptable. Some argue that we face a dilemma every time a country emerges from conflict. They argue that the pursuit of justice clashes with the pursuit of peace. However, peace and justice are not contradictory but, in fact, complementary. The precedent created by the referral of the Darfur situation to the International Criminal Court is promising. It is a major step forward in the fight against impunity and bodes well for the pursuit of international justice.

Lastly, let me briefly address the call by the Secretary-General and Member States, including Denmark, for management reform. The Secretary-General must be given the necessary discretionary powers, accompanied by accountability and independent oversight. We need to modernize the way we work so as to enable the Organization to meet its share of the priorities set out at the summit.

The coming months will be crucial. The outcome of the summit must be implemented. We will be faced with many difficult but important tasks. They will have to be solved in a true spirit of international cooperation. We must strengthen this great institution. It has a vital role to play in the world of today. Denmark will spare no effort in doing its share.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean-Paul Ngoupande, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Francophonie of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Ngoupande (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to express

heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We wish you every success in the discharge of your important functions. Your election to the presidency is, of course a reflection of your great personal qualities and experience. But it is also a tribute to your country, Sweden, which has always been committed to United Nations activities, in particular development assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to express to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, my deep admiration for his outstanding work as President, including the considerable efforts that he made throughout his term of office with a view to ensuring the success of the High-level Plenary Meeting, which took place from 14 to 16 September. As an African and as a representative of a country member of the Economic Community of Central African States, I cannot but feel great pride in his achievements.

Just a few days ago, a major event took place here at the United Nations — an event comparable to the Millennium Summit, in which leaders from all over the world took part.

I am sure that we all remember how the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session invited us to focus our discussion on the theme, "A stronger and more effective Organization: follow-up to and implementation of the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005".

On Friday, 16 September, late in the evening, a compromise document was adopted, which was acceptable to my delegation, even though it did not respond to all the concerns expressed in the courageous report of the Secretary-General, to whom, once again, my country would like to pay a well-deserved tribute. Some of the bold proposals that he made, in particular those relating to the need to reform the Organization, seem to us still to be entirely relevant, since they would make the United Nations stronger and more effective by adapting it to the challenges of twenty-first century.

The delegation of the Central African Republic believes that the debate on the reform of the Organization, in particular the reform of the Security Council, is far from over. This is not simply a matter of justice for all those who were not present in San Francisco 60 years ago when the Organization was created. The African continent, which really began to make itself heard internationally from 1960 onwards, rightly claims its place within the Security Council on an equitable basis. We can rest assured that the young people of Africa are paying attention to the activities of the United Nations and to our discussions here, and they find it increasingly difficult to understand why our continent is the only one not to have a permanent seat in that body, which is responsible for taking the most important decisions affecting peace and security throughout the world, including in Africa.

In a statement made from this rostrum on Thursday, 15 September 2005, during the debate in the High-level Plenary Meeting, His Excellency Mr. François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic, underlined the extent to which we, the small developing countries, in particular those that have gone through or that are currently going through major conflicts or political crises, need a strong and effective United Nations.

The recent history of our country makes clear the extent to which international solidarity, coordinated by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, succeeded in helping us to get back on our feet. After almost a decade of chaos, on 15 March 2003 an upsurge of patriotism enabled us to make a consensus-based transition, and we have benefited from the support, advice and expertise, as well as the financial and material assistance, of all of our external partners.

For two years, we were assisted by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies, and by our bilateral and multilateral partners, including France, China, the United States of America, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and, of course, our high-ranking African colleagues, among them the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, under the chairmanship of El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon.

Therefore, the success of our consensus-based transition is to a large extent the success of international solidarity as mobilized by the United Nations. Of course, the national will, expressed first and foremost by the citizens of the Central African Republic at all levels — who are weary of violence and

chaos and yearn for peace — and supported by our political elite as reflected in governmental actions by President Bozizé himself, this national will has been the prime factor enabling us to bring our transitional period and electoral process to a successful conclusion. In this sense, and rightly so, the international community has paid unanimous tribute to the wisdom of the Central Africans, who have chosen to return to peace and national concord.

But international solidarity was a necessary condition that led us successfully to a consensus-based transition and a successful electoral process. That is why, on behalf of President François Bozize and the Central African Government and people, I should like to reiterate to all of our partners an expression of our gratitude.

As the head of State said in his statement on Thursday, 15 September 2005, the Central African Republic is starting on a second stage in its process of return to peace and security, and that is the stage of reconstruction. This is a tremendous challenge in a country that was ruined and subject to chaos for many years. As Central Africans, we are well aware of our prime responsibility, of our collective responsibility as a nation, for the disaster that our country lived through. If only for that reason, the bulk of the efforts and sacrifices to be made in the reconstruction must fall to us. We are fully convinced of that. But we must honestly admit that in the face of the enormity and complexity of the tasks involved in reconstruction, the need for solidarity is still great. In saying that, we wish simply to recall precedents where the international community understood that the best way to avoid a step backwards was to support reconstruction in a strong way. The real victory over violence and disorder is achieved when extreme poverty, which is the prime cause of the frustrations that lead to confrontation, is rolled back. Successful elections and democratic institutions that begin to function and cope with the country's problems are certainly an important advance along the lengthy and difficult path toward peace and stability. But all this remains basically precarious, as long as the legitimate expectations of the population are not satisfied and their hope to benefit from the dividends of peace is not realized. How can this be done in a country that has been bled white, that does not even have the minimum required for life, and on which donors impose the same conditions as they do on countries that are functioning normally? How, when a country is painfully emerging from a long period of chaos, can it find the resources to repay the debt so that it can hope to benefit from additional economic assistance?

These issues and others face the international community as part of its responsibility for managing the emergence from crisis. This raises the question of the ways and means of consolidating peace to emerge from a period of chaos in order to avoid the risk of a return to square one. The Secretary-General very rightly underlined this in his report. The outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting also mentions that. The creation of a Peace-building Commission is, therefore, very timely. This is a sign that there is uncertainty in conflict management, as to discharge a sick person who is convalescence is only just beginning often leads to a relapse. It would be a good thing if this uncertainty could be removed. The moving appeal made by the President of the Transitional Government of Somalia strengthens us in our belief that the best way to avoid relapses, which are very difficult and costly to manage, is to provide strong support for reconstruction.

Whenever a country that has plunged into the abyss starts to raise its head again, it is a victory for the whole of humanity, and humanity cannot stand by while one of its members drowns, however small it is. Emergence from a crisis stands, therefore, as a new challenge for the United Nations. It is a matter of creating the conditions under which a country that is starting on the return to peace and stability can avoid tumbling back into a state of chaos. The solution involves, in our opinion, an additional demonstration of solidarity and generosity from its development partners to support the efforts of the convalescing society.

Our country is convinced that a lasting return to peace involves the participation of people at all levels of Central African society. The quest for peace and stability is not only the concern of professional politicians. Of course, it is important that politicians work tirelessly to develop arrangements that are in keeping with the national interest and that they avoid any radicalization of their political positions in order to give peace a chance. This is the behaviour Central African politicians have exhibited and it explains to a large extent the peaceful outcome of the consensus-based transitional process and the successful electoral process.

But this is not enough to consolidate peace. Those who pay the highest price for the failures of politics must also have their say. Young people, women, peasants, urban employees, private entrepreneurs and the media all have a great interest in being closely involved in efforts and actions aimed at peacebuilding and we should therefore pay tribute to the model of cooperation initiated by the United Nations in the Great Lakes region of Africa. This cooperation, which regularly brings together the heads of State and their ministers as well as various segments of civil society, ensures that discussions related to the quest for peace involve non-politicians as well. This initiative, moreover, has the merit of bringing to the table other countries, either closely or less closely involved in the Great Lakes problems. In fact, no crisis is limited to just one country, there are direct or indirect effects on neighbours. That is why the tremendous work done by Professor Ibrahima Fall should be encouraged and supported.

As far as the Central African Republic is concerned, the priorities of the Government of National Reconciliation formed after the election were clearly identified in the Declaration of General Policy presented to the National Assembly in early August by Prime Minister Elie Dote. There are three focal points for the short and medium term. First, the re-establishment of security throughout the whole country; secondly, the control and stabilization of public finances; and thirdly, the rehabilitation and relaunching of various sectors of the national economy, such as the mining industries, lumber, agriculture and livestock.

With regard to the first point, it goes without saying that no progress is possible without eradicating the endemic insecurity caused by armed bands, especially those who set up roadblocks. Reconstruction of the security and defence forces, which has already begun, and the re-equipment of those forces are matters that the Government is working to resolve. Subregional cooperation is also an important asset, with the active presence of the multinational force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa and operations carried out by forces from the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Chad along their shared borders. In this connection we should pay tribute to the initiative taken by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Bangui, which organized a meeting of subregional diplomats and defence experts in Yaoundé, from 26 to 27 August. We should also pay tribute to the contribution of France, which is providing the multinational force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa with valuable logistical support.

Beyond short-term considerations, the major long-term challenges facing the Central African Republic are those of health and education. Education and health care are among the principal objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. The Central African Republic hopes to achieve those Goals by 2015. We know that lasting development cannot be established without strengthening our national capacities.

Having suffered in various ways in recent years, the people of the Central African Republic sincerely aspire to peace and stability. They are determined to strive and sacrifice in order to leave the painful past behind. They need the understanding and support of their partners, chief among which is the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fabio Berardi, Minister for Foreign and Political Affairs of San Marino.

Mr. Berardi (San Marino) (*spoke in Italian, English text furnished by the delegation*): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of San Marino, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Jan Eliasson on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I also wish to express to the outgoing President, Mr. Jean Ping, our deepest gratitude for his commitment and determination in fulfilling his mandate.

At the outset, I would also like to express my appreciation for the result of the outcome document. I am confident that, with a clear mandate for our heads of State and Government, we will be able to reach our goals.

The United Nations is at an extremely important and critical juncture. Indeed, the challenge of United Nations reform has become inevitable and necessary in laying the foundations of its future activity. It is now all too clear that the reform will involve its major bodies, working methods and management of human and economic resources. The United Nations structure will be modified with the aim of showing the entire world that the Organization is an efficient and

democratic body that can guarantee peace and development.

The reform, which will lead to tension and require sacrifices, will be criticized by a number of States, as is the case with all difficult compromises. The process will be long and encounter numerous obstacles, but it is necessary and indispensable.

San Marino believes that the reform process already under way will not stop. However, changes will have to be wide-ranging and take account of the need to face important issues, such as the reform of the Security Council. Most importantly, the reform will have to be supported by the widest possible consensus and based on two principles: democracy and transparency. We hope the enlargement will take into account the widest possible geographical and regional representation and that the solution's methods and ideas will not be forcibly imposed or privilege the interests of only a few countries. We endorse the principles of "Uniting for consensus" and are ready to consider any proposal that does not create fractures and can establish a new and lasting balance.

For San Marino, the United Nations must be based upon democracy, which gives it its legitimacy and moral strength. Streamlining structures and procedures is also necessary to greater effectiveness, because it is in the field, among people, that the United Nations really fulfils its mission. Indeed, it is the people who determine the importance of this Organization in the improvement of their lives.

With regard to some essential aspects presently under discussion, San Marino feels that the proposed creation of a human rights council may not solve the basic problem of the Commission on Human Rights, which is politicization. However, San Marino is of the view that human rights protection deserves the same consideration given by the Economic and Social Council to social and economic aspects and by the Security Council to peace and security.

The human rights council should be directly accountable to the General Assembly and have a broad-based composition allowing for the adequate participation of small and medium-sized countries. Moreover, the specific competencies of the new council vis-à-vis the Third Committee should be established in order to avoid duplication of activities and inefficiencies.

The proposed peacebuilding commission is an excellent institutional response to post-conflict situations. The commission should play an important role not only in the resolution, but also in the prevention of conflicts. Moreover, it should find ad hoc solutions for countries in transition from totalitarianism or institutional anarchy to democracy.

In our view, the commission should submit recommendations to the Security Council on measures to be adopted to guarantee consistency in peace interventions, economic recovery processes, the rebuilding of national institutions and public administration, and the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law. Moreover, we believe that the Commission should be composed of members of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as of countries directly involved in specific situations.

Just a few days ago, the majority of the world leaders gathered in this very Hall to discuss what has been done so far to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Over the past five years, development assistance activities have fallen short of expectations. We sincerely hope that the recently concluded summit will promote and encourage stronger commitment by all developed and developing countries.

San Marino has followed very attentively the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General and has actively participated in the discussions of the Panel's report and of the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom", as well as in the negotiations of the outcome document of the General Assembly. We would have liked the latter document to contain more incisive and comprehensive proposals.

San Marino is aware that development is the sine qua non condition for achieving the Millennium Goals. Today, in the twenty-first century, more than a billion people still live on less than a dollar a day and 30,000 children die every day from hunger. Those figures cannot leave us indifferent. Only by eradicating poverty, underdevelopment and epidemics, and by forgiving the crushing debt of developing countries, will collective well-being be achieved.

Peace and security are intimately linked to the Millennium Goals, as they are essential for a country to improve its economic and human conditions. Peace and security cannot be separated from concerns about

terrorism, as evidenced by the numerous recent cowardly attacks. Terrorism must not divert the international community from its commitment to promoting democratization, the culture of peace and respect for religions, ethnic groups and different cultures.

All States must share the responsibility for fighting terrorism and cooperate at the regional and international levels to implement specific and effective preventive measures. Every State must adopt the necessary legislation to break the vicious cycle of terrorism and to prevent its financing through economic and banking cooperation.

The principle of "the responsibility to protect" is an extremely interesting concept. That idea, however, can be accepted only if understood not as a violation of national sovereignty, but as a duty of all States vis-à-vis countries plagued by massacres, genocide and humanitarian crises.

San Marino is closely following developments in the peace process in the Middle East. The decision of the Israeli Government to remove its settlers from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has been one of the most significant steps in the implementation of the road map and Prime Minister Sharon has showed great courage and determination, despite all domestic difficulties, in taking such a decision.

San Marino shares the hope of the international community that the Palestinian Government will also fully respect its commitments and, by completely rejecting terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups, will maintain and strengthen the dialogue and constructive relations responsibly established with the Israeli Government.

We welcome with great satisfaction the recent elections held in the new Afghanistan, now on its way to democracy and with a higher degree of freedom, as well as the elections and approval of the new Constitution in Iraq, which we hope may lead to a real institutional, social and cultural rebirth of that country.

We cannot fail to address and stress the situation of women and children in our discussions on the concerns to be addressed at the beginning of this Millennium and on the development of humankind. Children, in particular, are most vulnerable to war and famine and bear the brunt of adult actions and decisions. Bombings and conflicts, malnutrition, poverty, treatable diseases, child labour and sexual abuse cause them great suffering and death. If people were merely to stop and think of those children, many of the worst events in the world could be avoided.

This year, my country has undertaken a number of humanitarian initiatives in favour of children, mainly in Africa, with the support of our institutions. Let me mention, in that regard, the recent unanimous decision of my Parliament in favour of programmes improving childhood conditions in Uganda.

Poverty and hunger are the prison in which many women eke out their existence, victims of injustice and discrimination. Our inability to free those women, despite all the means available, is one of the major scandals of our day. At a time of economic well-being and progress, though not widespread, complicity with that injustice through negligence or incapacity is unacceptable. The mass media now at our disposal do not allow us to ignore that situation. The implementation of Beijing and Beijing+5 is crucial to demolishing the walls of that prison and to guaranteeing respect and development for the women of the twenty-first century.

Last year, San Marino ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and, last June, Parliament approved accession to its Optional Protocol. I deposited our instruments of accession upon my arrival here in New York. Moreover, San Marino is tirelessly committed to supporting women's complete integration into and equality in its society.

On this occasion, I would express the hope that the international community will strengthen its efforts to protect the environment and prevent natural disasters. To that end, international cooperation is of the utmost importance, and the Kyoto Protocol is a particularly important instrument for our country.

On that subject, I wish to reiterate my country's condolences and solidarity to the people tragically struck by natural disasters, such as those in South-East Asia some months ago and, more recently, along the coasts of the Gulf of Mexico in the United States of America.

The Millennium Development Goals, peace processes, fighting injustice and our many other great challenges may seem impossible to face, but humankind has the necessary resources and

instruments to achieve those objectives and the United Nations is one of the major tools at our disposal. I am confident that the Organization will be up to that noble task. To that end, I express my most sincere wishes to you, Sir, to the Secretary-General and to all colleagues, diplomats and officials who believe in the ideals of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Aboudou Soefo, Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Cooperation and Francophonie of the Comoros.

Mr. Soefo (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): Taking the floor for the first time before this Assembly, it is my genuine pleasure warmly to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. Your election was a personal honour to you and a recognition of the diplomatic skills that we all acknowledge. It also enhances the prestigious image of your country. Please rest assured of the support of the Union of the Comoros as you complete your exalted mission.

Your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, deserves our full admiration and congratulations on the effectiveness and devotion with which he led the work of the fifty-ninth session.

I also wish to reiterate our confidence in Secretary-General Kofi Annan and above all to express our gratitude for his tireless commitment to establishing a more just, peaceful and prosperous world.

Our world faces challenges and threats that jeopardize our security and prosperity. And yet, we have also seen unprecedented technological and scientific development. That disparity highlights the stark reversal of our human values and of the basic principles of promoting peace, respect for human dignity and international solidarity.

Is there any need to list the modern scourges that have engulfed every region of the world: extremism, terrorism, ethnic cleansing and others? In addition to that stark assessment of the state of the world — a result of the failure of the human conscience — we have also been struck by natural disasters, including floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves and, sadly, many others.

To cite just the most recent example, Hurricane Katrina, which devastated Louisiana, is a striking illustration of that phenomenon. Through me, the Government of the Union of the Comoros offers its deep sympathy to the United States of America authorities and the entire American people.

Like the victims of natural disasters, the victims of violence and human injustice have no recourse other than this Organization, entrusted with the most noble mission of defending and preserving their dignity. But the Organization will need a new impetus to spur international action worthy of the expectations of our peoples.

We must therefore redefine our vision of world security. We must keep the human being at the heart of our considerations and take every parameter of human security into account. Indeed, there can be no lasting peace while poverty, disease, despair, war and oppression persist. In a word, there can be no peace if we are insecure about our daily lives and the future. There is an ineluctable link between peace and the development to which we all aspire. We must therefore set ourselves a code of good behaviour and create a life in which the law reigns supreme.

We must reinvigorate and re-energize the United Nations in order effectively to prepare it to face the problems of the modern world. At the same time, the composition of its bodies should be as representative as possible so as to enshrine and embody its universality and safeguard the sovereign equality of States, especially the smallest among them. As the supreme global institution, the United Nations should also operate on the basis of rules and norms recognized and approved by all, which will strengthen its credibility. Only thus will we will truly be able to solve the problems of terrorism, addressing them at their roots, and express our sympathy for and solidarity with those who have devoted their entire lives to fighting exclusion and injustice.

At this very moment, I have a deeply considered thought for all those who have fought for noble causes throughout the world. The brotherly people of Palestine offers a perfect illustration thereof. Indeed, the aspirations of the Palestinian people are those of a nation reclaiming its dignity and security. In the interests of all the peoples of the Middle East, the peace process must continue, because building and maintaining peace is essential to our world. It is critical that a Palestinian State be established and allowed to live in peace, security and stability with the State of Israel and its other neighbours.

My country welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a decisive step in the quest for a timely, just and equitable solution to that long drawn-out problem. We are convinced that this gesture augurs well for the region and peoples concerned.

As for Iraq, adequate conditions must be established to promote genuine progress towards peace, which will guarantee the stability necessary to the country's socio-economic development.

The situation in Asia also deserves the focused attention of the international community. The stalemate in the issue of the Chinese province of Taiwan, to cite just one instance, is not conducive to the promotion of stability in that part of the world. That is why, in its concern for the ongoing prevalence of law in international relations, and in order to guarantee respect for the national unity of countries, the Union of the Comoros urges the General Assembly to heed the legitimate claims of the Government of the People's Republic of China over the Chinese province of Taiwan.

With regard to Africa, we welcome the imminent settlement of certain crises, including in the Republic of the Sudan, where current developments are opening the prospects for effective national reconciliation. The Government of the Union of the Comoros encourages the Sudanese parties to persevere along that path.

As to other crises that remain unresolved, we urge the international community to play a lead role in finding solutions. Indeed, stability remains a paramount condition for the success of Africa's economic development efforts through the New Partnership for Africa's Development and other regional and international initiatives seeking the same goal. Likewise, those efforts will remain inconclusive so long as HIV/AIDS, malaria, drepanocytosis and other diseases continue to rage in our countries. Other threats include drought, famine, locust infestations, extreme poverty and the debt burden stifling the economies of our countries. We therefore commend the initiative of convening a summit to assess the Millennium Development Goals, which should allow for the adoption of new arrangements for the achievement of the Goals by 2015.

Environmental problems affect all States and are a source of genuine concern to us all. Unbridled pollution, the destruction of the ozone layer, deforestation, rising sea levels — in a word, the ceaseless deterioration of the environment — require us all to heighten our awareness of those global threats.

And yet, while such problems may affect any number of States, we should recall that some — the small island developing States in particular — have specific characteristics that must be taken into consideration and addressed with greater attention. The Union of the Comoros itself recently suffered a volcanic eruption that severely damaged our environment. Such continuous threats to our countries call for the timely establishment of mechanisms to prevent and manage natural disasters.

We welcome regional initiatives, including those undertaken by the Indian Ocean Commission, to better manage such situations and we urge the international community also to provide us with its invaluable assistance. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of France, the United Nations Development Programme, and all other friendly countries and specialized agencies of the United Nations that have greatly helped us to grapple with and manage that disaster.

I spoke earlier of the inequalities prevalent in our world. They are manifest at many levels, to be sure, but the socio-economic aspect is the most glaring. Long marginalized in world decision-making, our countries of the South continue to suffer the consequences of our economic fragility. The rules of the game in world trade exclude us de facto from the playing field. Moreover, the paucity of new information and communications technologies in the South is a striking reminder of the vast abyss in that field between our countries and those of the North.

Debt continues to burden many countries of the South, despite the fact that, thanks to a sudden surge of generosity and, above all, responsibility on the part of the wealthy countries, some saw their situation revisited and improved by the cancellation of their debt. That only highlights the urgency of the need to assess the economic and financial situation of the countries of the South in order for them to be genuinely integrated into the dynamic of globalization.

If the disparities in and slow pace of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in general are to be redressed, a world partnership is needed. In that context, special attention must be paid to the least privileged social strata, including by

providing access to financial services through the promotion of microfinancing and microcredit.

Furthermore, we must address and objectively analyse the issue of debt. We must prioritize the cancellation of the public debt of the heavily indebted poor countries, the least developed countries, and the low- and medium-income developing countries. Finally, international action should promote a fair, regulated, open and non-discriminatory trading system, notably by facilitating the developing countries' accession to the World Trade Organization.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable forum. As the crucible of our warning cries and our hopes for a better world, it remains the perfect framework for discussing the world situation and for opening a window on the situation in each of our countries.

With respect to the Union of the Comoros, I am pleased to announce from this rostrum that we have completed our establishment of new institutions, which are now operational. We thank everyone for their important contributions to that end. We now have the two-fold duty to consolidate the valuable achievements of national reconciliation and to promote our country's socio-economic development.

With our development partners, we are therefore striving to reinvigorate our cooperation and redirect it towards the well-being of our people. In the same vein, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a priority of the Government of the Union of the Comoros.

Furthermore, my country completed a staff-monitored programme of the International Monetary Fund in January 2005 and is working to streamline its public finances with a view to concluding a Facility for Poverty Reduction and Growth programme with the Bretton Woods institutions so as to mobilize the financial resources necessary to implementing its development priorities.

In that respect, the Comoros authorities are also attempting to implement a recommendation from the international community to convene a donors conference on our behalf. I therefore have the pleasure of informing the Assembly that such a meeting, critical to my country's economic and social future, will be held on 8 December in the Republic of Mauritius under the auspices of the African Union. On behalf of my country, I call on the international community to help us to ensure the gathering's success.

I also take this pleasant opportunity warmly to thank the Republic of Mauritius for its generous offer to host that important conference. In particular, we thank Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam for his readiness to co-preside the conference.

In the same vein, on behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, I pay a well-deserved tribute to the Republic of South Africa for its ongoing support for the Comoros and for having successfully coordinated the efforts of the African Union and of regional countries to achieve national reconciliation in my country. The people of the Comoros sincerely and happily welcome the tireless interest of Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, in the future of our country and his willingness to co-preside the donors conference.

I cannot conclude without raising here the issue of the Comorian island of Mayotte. Following a series of consultations held between French and Comorian authorities in their common concern to find a solution that will preserve the friendship and cooperation between the two countries, safeguard the interests of both States and satisfy the aspirations of the entire population of the archipelago, a new process has been launched. It will promote direct dialogue between the two parties with a view to finding a solution that protects everyone's interests in accordance with the law.

The Comorian Government has invested a great deal of hope in the new dynamic. It believes that it can trust the French Republic to strive for a joint and honourable resolution of the situation. I therefore take this opportunity to reaffirm my sincere thanks to all the friends of the Comoros, who have never failed in their support, their encouragement and their solidarity with my country in the quest for a solution to the issue in line with the law. I also wish to assure them, on behalf of the Government of the Union of the Comoros, that they will always be kept up-to-date on developments in the issue and, whenever necessary, involved in the process.

Working for peace means fighting all that fuels extremism and every source of frustration. Working for peace also means investing all necessary resources in development, without which humankind has no dignity. The health of our world depends on our Organization.

Let us strive for its renewal, for more peace, for happiness and for greater human dignity. Let us strive for equal opportunity for all.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bernard Rudolf Bot, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Bot (Netherlands): It is my firm opinion that we achieved important results at our summit. We created a peacebuilding commission and agreed to establish a human rights council. We have good language on development, including unanimous agreement on the Millennium Development Goals, and we agreed on the responsibility to protect. We made progress towards consensus on the fight against terrorism and agreed on some essential management and reform issues.

Some have expressed disappointment about the results of the summit and, indeed, not all of our ambitions were achieved. Does that imply that it is wrong to be ambitious? Of course not. In a world society of 191 Member States, we must accept that the end result of negotiations will always reflect a compromise between different ambitions, and that we have to be tolerant of each other's diverse views and interests.

As regards my own country's expectations, it is a matter of concern that we did not agree on any measures to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — one of the greatest threats to humankind. We had also hoped for more specific agreement on the modalities for the human rights council and would have preferred clear parameters for the use of force, as well as solid language on the International Criminal Court. And the Netherlands would have liked to give the Secretary-General more scope to carry out his management responsibilities.

But all in all, we have made clear progress. So let us now agree to remain ambitious, to move forward with implementing the programme we have agreed, and to allow the United Nations to deliver on our promises. I look forward to the outline of work the President of this Assembly has announced, and I fully support the accountability pact with which the Secretary-General has challenged us.

We have also achieved something else, something less apparent but equally important. We have reaffirmed our political and moral support for a fundamental underlying principle, namely, that we need to build bridges through dialogue and cooperation and that we have to promote respect and tolerance. And we all share the conviction that, in promoting respect and tolerance across the globe, the United Nations has a central role to play.

According to a well-known saying, there is only one thing we cannot tolerate, and that is intolerance. Indeed, the struggle to protect tolerance from intolerance is one of the great challenges of our time.

It is in the interest of all States to take up the fight against radical ideologies that turn people into terrorists. Terrorism, as we all know, is a cross-border threat. People of all persuasions and beliefs are its innocent victims. And so we must respond collectively, both to terrorism and to the radical ideologies that feed and breed it. Rwanda and the wars in the former Yugoslavia are sharp reminders of how the political use of intolerant and racist rhetoric can even lead to genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Still, I do not believe there is or will be a clash of civilizations. But there is a clash between the tolerant and the intolerant within and across our societies, within and across our civilizations.

That is why it is now so important to take on the radical ideologies that foster violent extremism. Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), calling on all States to prohibit, by law, incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts, sends an important message to the hate-mongers.

Mr. Sambu (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To fight an effective battle against violent extremism and terrorism, we must strike a careful balance between judicial and police measures, on the one hand, and meaningful dialogue on the other. Let us learn from each other in that respect. I believe that peer review in the human rights council could, in future, help us all to maintain that careful balance.

Let us invest in a global culture of tolerance and mutual respect. We must not look at cultural, religious and ideological differences as unbridgeable divides separating adversaries. Instead, we should join forces for a global society in which the quest for greater unity goes hand in hand with respect for diversity.

The best way for societies to protect tolerance is for them to treasure their identity and, at the same time, dare to reassess the validity of their prevailing norms and standards. Recent events in the Netherlands, for example, have confronted our society with the question of how to protect our centuries-old tradition of tolerance from those who would abuse it to sow hatred and division. That process of reflection is an ongoing one, but part of the answer is to constantly remind ourselves that it is wrong to hold an entire community accountable for the deeds of individuals.

Let us all vow to protect tolerance from intolerance. Let us invest in mutual respect and try to change the mindset of those who propagate intolerance and violent extremism. That will require permanent dialogue, with a central role for the United Nations, the only truly global platform we possess.

Serious dialogue can also help to clear up misunderstandings. One of the most striking misunderstandings concerns the nature of secularism, by which I mean the separation of State and religious institutions. That separation protects the freedom of all citizens of all religious backgrounds, as well as of people who do not practice any religion. In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, politicians and political parties may be inspired by religion, as long as the institutions remain separate.

That is precisely why, in my country and across the European continent, there is a place for Islam, just as there is a place for other religions. There is a place for any form of Islam that allows believers to be both Muslims and citizens of a democratic society.

Citizenship means more than just holding a passport. True citizenship calls for an active contribution to the society of which one is a part. It also calls for a society that is open to the many and varied contributions of all its citizens. Radical ideologies that push people to isolate themselves from the rest of society and to reject or even attack the spirit of democracy will run up against our determined refusal to give even one inch, in my country and, I hope, everywhere. For intolerance is a global, cross-border phenomenon, which is why we so urgently need the United Nations at our side.

United Nations reform will mean making good on our promises. It will require determined implementation of the plans and proposals we have agreed on. If we are serious about our effort to build a more humane, dignified and just world, United Nations reform must also strengthen the protection of tolerance from intolerance.

In our fast-changing world, people long for safety and certainty, and that is understandable. But leaders all over the world have a duty to explain that narrow worldviews, with no place for differences, can offer no genuine protection. Without respect for diversity, there can be no unity.

If we want to protect tolerance from intolerance, we should look critically at what we teach our children. How can we expect them to become tolerant adults if they learn in school to despise people of other faiths and ethnicities? It is not enough for Governments to do polite business with other Governments; they should, at the same time, not allow hotbeds of intolerance to exist in their societies.

There is an old saying that we reap what we sow. If we wish to reap a harvest of tolerance and mutual respect, and foster a sense of common purpose, then we must set to work now. Let us begin sowing the seeds of tolerance and mutual respect here at the United Nations, the world's main crossroads of civilizations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Fatoumata Kaba-Sidibé, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

Mrs. Kaba-Sidibé (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, warmly to congratulate Mr. Eliasson on his outstanding election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. My country, Guinea, assures him of its full cooperation as he carries out his important mission.

I also pay well-deserved tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for the competence, effectiveness and devotion with which he led the work of the fifty-ninth session.

I am also pleased to convey to Secretary-General Kofi Annan the deep appreciation, encouragement and support of Mr. Lansana Conté, President of the Republic, for his tireless and praiseworthy work.

The summit meeting at this session of the General Assembly has substantially stiffened our common resolve to promote international peace and security, the rule of law and the right to development. The

assessment of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the renewed commitment of States Members to achieving them are cause for hope.

The Republic of Guinea nevertheless remains convinced that if we are better to meet the threats and challenges we face, we must resolutely pursue the reforms necessary to revitalize our Organization.

In the name of peace and security, the concerted and decisive action of the United Nations system and of regional and subregional organizations, the African Union in particular, has made significant progress in recent months.

In West Africa, and especially in the Mano River basin, hopes for peace are gradually growing after years of turbulence and tragedy.

In Liberia, the political and institutional rebirth under way is encouraging, although many obstacles still hinder national reconciliation and the country's economic revival. It is essential that, in order to preserve their legitimacy and fairness, we do everything possible to prevent October's elections from being manipulated by the forces of destabilization. We therefore call on the international community to give that country the assistance necessary to seeing the transition through and launching its own reconstruction.

In Sierra Leone, the process of national reconciliation is continuing, thereby promoting peacebuilding and development. My delegation believes that adequate financing for the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the transfer of all persons presumed guilty of serious crimes under international law are prerequisites for putting an end to impunity and consolidate subregional stability.

As concerns Guinea-Bissau, my country welcomes the smooth holding of the presidential elections, which herald a positive new era that will be conducive to national reconciliation and a return to constitutional order.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the signing of the Pretoria Agreement on 6 April 2005 has given rise to real hopes that the crisis can be resolved. However, recent developments are a source of concern to us. Our Government calls on all parties concerned to spare no effort to promote a political settlement of the conflict, since peace and stability in the subregion hinge on this.

In Burundi, major progress has been made in the peace process, particularly through the holding of legislative and presidential elections in free, fair and peaceful conditions. Guinea welcomes this and calls on our brothers in Burundi to continue on the path to national reconciliation and reconstruction.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the transitional period is at a decisive stage, problems persist in the eastern part of the country. My country encourages all parties to abide by the relevant provisions of the comprehensive agreement.

In the Sudan, despite the sad death of Vice-President Garang, the establishment of a national unity Government and the political will shown by the various protagonists will help to defuse tensions.

Guinea urges all parties in Darfur to pursue the negotiations that have begun under the auspices of the African Union with a view to achieving a comprehensive, consensus-based solution.

In the Horn of Africa, Somalia has reached a decisive stage with the creation of a Transitional Federal Government. My delegation makes an urgent appeal to the various factions to engage in negotiations with the Government in order to reach a comprehensive peace agreement.

Regarding the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, we call on both parties fully to respect the Algiers Accord and to implement the Boundary Commission's decision.

As to the situation in the Western Sahara, Guinea supports a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution. It encourages the parties concerned to enhance their cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Concerning the Middle East, our Government welcomes Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. However, we remain concerned by the occupation of the West Bank, the continued illegal construction of the separation wall and the continuing detention of Palestinian political prisoners.

That is why we appeal to the two parties to respect the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, as well as the Quartet road map. This is the only way to bring about the creation of two States — Palestine and Israel — living side by side in safety and security within secure and recognized boundaries.

In Iraq, despite the holding of legislative elections that led to the establishment of a transitional Government, we cannot but deplore the current climate of daily violence. We agree that everything should be done to help the country's leaders to consolidate the political transition, put an end to indiscriminate violence and build a united, democratic and prosperous Iraq.

With regard to Asia, our Government reaffirms its belief in the principle of one China. We also attach importance to the peaceful and independent reunification of the two Koreas as well as to ongoing efforts to maintain peace, security and stability on the Korean peninsula.

My delegation notes with profound concern the resurgence of terrorist activities throughout the world. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and in all its manifestations, for it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We express solidarity with all States that have fallen victim to it.

To eradicate that scourge, my delegation reaffirms the need to tackle with determination its root causes, including injustice, exclusion, poverty and the intensification of social divisions.

We welcome the adoption by the Assembly on 13 April 2005 of the resolution on the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and we urge Member States to reach agreement on a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which were held, respectively, in May and July 2005, shows the concern of States parties to do more to address disarmament-related problems.

However, we note and deplore the fact that the States parties to the Treaty have not yet succeeded in reaching consensus on questions of substance. Hence we urge all States to continue negotiations in order to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime.

With regard to combating the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Guinea has resolutely undertaken to eradicate that scourge and welcomes the adoption of a draft instrument for the tracing of such weapons.

We invite the donor community to provide appropriate support for the implementation of the subregional programme of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The initiative to transform the ECOWAS moratorium into a binding legal instrument merits due consideration by Member States.

Aware of the importance that peoples attach to development goals, of the latter's interdependence and of what is at stake, the Government of Guinea has adopted a national poverty-reduction strategy whose implementation has, regrettably, been compromised by external factors linked to rebel attacks, a massive influx of refugees and regional instability.

My delegation appeals urgently to all development partners to support Guinea in its efforts to implement that strategy, which remains the most certain way of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In that connection, we welcome the recent progress made in the framework of poverty reduction, particularly the commitment of the G-8 to double official development assistance (ODA) over the next few years and immediate debt cancellation for the 18 most indebted poor countries. We commend and endorse all other initiatives designed to increase funds for ODA. We express the hope that the Gleneagles initiative, which represents an important step forward in the right direction, will be translated into reality and will be extended to all least developed countries.

Furthermore, in the context of the current World Trade Organization trade negotiations, we urge Member States to show a spirit of compromise and diligence in order to overcome their differences and come to an understanding on a consensus programme for the implementation of the Doha Development Agenda before the sixth Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. What is at stake is the very future of the multilateral trading system.

Our work is taking place following the High-level Plenary Meeting, as a consequence of which our leaders have adopted an outcome document to guide our actions. The decisions and commitments taken at the summit clearly indicate that a new era has begun. The time for promises has passed, and we must now translate our commitments into concrete action in a

spirit of true solidarity between developed and developing countries, on the basis of a far-reaching reform of our Organization.

By so doing, we will leave to future generations, to which we owe a debt, the right tools to lead humankind towards a better future.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Ramos-Horta (Timor-Leste): Because of the constraints on our time, I shall omit several paragraphs of my statement, the full text of which has been distributed to delegations.

The President, the Prime Minister and the people of Timor-Leste have conveyed to the people and the Government of the United States our profound sympathy for the people of the Gulf states, in particular the people of the city of New Orleans, who were the victims of Hurricane Katrina. President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have spoken touching words of gratitude in recognition of the outpouring of sympathy from so many nations. We must remember that the United States Administration and the American people were among the first and most generous to respond to the tsunami tragedy that befell the peoples living on the borders of the Indian Ocean on 26 December last year.

Only a little more than three years ago, the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, handed over power to our elected President. Since then, we have made real progress in nation-building, peacebuilding, economic development, national reconciliation and enhancing relations with our neighbours. Timor-Leste has acceded to the seven main international human rights instruments, and my Government is committed to fulfilling its obligations. We were among the first in the world to pioneer a streamlined treaty reporting procedure. We are currently drafting our first reports, and all Government agencies are participating in that exercise. The internal political and security situation, including our porous common land borders, is peaceful and stable. A recent report of the World Bank, commenting on the general situation of peace and stability in my country, stated,

> "Most countries emerging from conflict ... relapse into violence within five years. Timor-Leste has avoided that fate, maintained peace and political stability, and established security".

As a result of the unexpectedly high prices of oil and gas, Timor-Leste today enjoys a surplus, which has enabled our Government to increase our public expenditure by 30 per cent during the current fiscal year. That increase will benefit mostly the rural population and the poorest. In addition, we are proud to report that 36 per cent of our national budget is allocated to education and health.

We have fostered the best possible relationships with our neighbours. As of the end of July, we became the twenty-fifth member of the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); our next goal is ASEAN membership. We enjoy special observer status in the Pacific Islands Forum. Without the active involvement of our regional and international friends, the leadership and coordinating role of the United Nations and the engagement of its many agencies, of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the Asian Development Bank, we would not have been able to achieve the impressive progress we have made thus far.

With regard to truth and reconciliation, I shall now address the issue of justice. In an effort to uncover the truth about the events of 1999, the Governments of Timor-Leste and Indonesia have established a joint commission on truth and friendship. The commission is mandated to examine serious acts of violence that occurred in the period before, during and after the 30 August 1999 popular consultations sponsored by the United Nations.

We are accused in some quarters of being too preoccupied with forging close relations with Indonesia, to the detriment of justice for past abuses, and in doing so of encouraging impunity. To our accusers, we say the following. We are mindful of the need to accord dignity and respect to the victims of past abuses, and we believe that in the pursuit of justice we must be sensitive to the need to establish a balance between comprehensive justice and national reconciliation in order to avoid perpetuating the divisions of the past and risking the exacerbation of existing cleavages in our society. We believe that our first obligation, as a responsible member of the international community, is to build a peaceful, stable, democratic and prosperous country. By consolidating nation-building, internal peace and stability and

unshackling our people from poverty, we can contribute to wider peace and stability.

If one were to read the aforementioned World Bank report on the developments in my country, one would reach the same upbeat conclusion about the impressive gains that we have attained in only three years. Let me share with members some additional findings:

> "Timor-Leste, the world's newest nation, was created out of ashes ... Given that the country started from scratch both physically and institutionally, Timor-Leste has done remarkably well".

We have developed a model Petroleum Fund legal and policy regime, which we took directly to the people and to the National Parliament for approval. We do not want Timor-Leste to fall prey to the developing nations' so-called resource curse, whereby God-given resources are squandered. The key principle is that only the sustainable income from our petroleum wealth will be available for current expenditure. Commenting on our Petroleum Fund, the World Bank said that Timor-Leste

> "has adopted a state-of-the-art legal framework for on- and off-shore petroleum production and taxation and a draft savings policy and associated Petroleum Fund Act consistent with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) ... having embraced transparency principles even before EITI existed ... True to stated principles, the Government has adhered to a provisional savings policy for petroleum revenues ahead of the adoption of the permanent savings policy".

I should now like to touch upon the theme of United Nations reform. As we observe the current news coverage surrounding the oil-for-food scandal, with the United Nations painted as the villain, we are certainly disappointed that the Organization we idealize is tainted by allegations of corruption.

In peacekeeping and conflict prevention, we must remember that while the Secretary-General has the responsibility to alert the Security Council to ongoing or potential conflicts that may threaten international peace and security, the ultimate decision to act rests with the Security Council, in particular the five permanent members. The role of the United Nations in the world has not, however, been limited to peacekeeping; it has provided facilities and an environment for informal meetings between parties in conflict, it has mediated hostage situations or border disputes, and it has mobilized resources and coordinated assistance to war-torn countries or to communities affected by natural disasters.

While we all agree that our collective Organization has failed at times, those shortcomings and failures should not obscure its virtues and successes. The United Nations can become more effective if regional bodies do their share in addressing the challenges in their respective regions.

Much has been said and written about the need for a thorough review of the United Nations system, and much of the debate has been focused on the Security Council, overshadowing all other issues, including the much-needed reform of the General Assembly itself. Reform is also urgent in regard to the existing human rights system. The proliferation of treaty bodies and agenda items results in a morass of duplication, waste, inefficiency and loss of focus.

The General Assembly remains the prime organ of the United Nations that brings together all nations, rich and poor, large and small. The endless and repetitive yearly general debate and agenda must be reviewed in order to shorten it and make it more focused.

I now turn to the Commission on Human Rights. No country or group has a monopoly on selectivity. We are all good practitioners, focusing our attention on issues that are often remote from our shores or that do not collide with friendships, alliances or interests. Timor-Leste fully endorses the establishment of a Human Rights Council and is prepared to serve in such a body if we are asked to do so.

Timor-Leste strongly supports the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission, which will play a critical role in post-conflict situations. The merits are *sui generis*. In view of our unique and rich experience, Timor-Leste would be pleased to serve on that new body if our friends believe we can be useful there.

There is agreement that the Economic and Social Council must be reformed. It seems to duplicate or add little value to its subsidiary bodies. We do not support expanding the Council's mandate to include managing United Nations post-conflict activities.

A permanent member of the Security Council should not limit its peacekeeping contributions to eloquent rhetoric while refraining from providing the troops necessary to back up its words. We are all capable of delivering eloquent speeches with apparent moral force, but we do not all have the same political will, courage or raw power to match our words.

Aspiring Security Council members, permanent and non-permanent alike, should be countries with stable and open political systems and with effective credible national leaderships that inspire trust and respect in their respective regions and throughout the world as a whole.

My Government holds the view that regional balance remains a sine-qua-non principle as should representation of civilizations. Asia, which contains half of the world's population, is grossly underrepresented in the United Nations system and will remain so, even with the possible addition of India and Japan. Timor-Leste supports the G-4 initiative, because we believe that the four countries concerned fulfil every reasonable qualifying criterion for permanent membership in the Security Council.

Timor-Leste, which has an overwhelmingly Catholic majority population, is proud to have been the first country to draw the attention of this body to the need to insure that the Muslim world be adequately represented in an expanded Security Council. We continue to believe that Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, with the third largest population in our region and the third largest Asian democracy, is uniquely suited for permanent member status.

I wish now to touch on an issue that has been very much in the news in the last few months: Japan and its neighbours. Timor-Leste understands the reservations of certain countries that do not wish to see too large a Security Council; we understand the reluctance of some of the current permanent five to abandon or share privileges with new ones. We understand that countries that were invaded and colonized by Japan during the Second World War are not receptive to their former aggressor. Timor-Leste, too, was occupied by Japan during the Second World War. But we also remember how the proud Japanese people were made to pay an extraordinary price for their Second World War sins. Hiroshima stands as the living reminder of that horrible price.

Japanese leaders were brought to trial at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and paid for their crimes. A defeated Japan was effectively occupied and administered by the victorious American Power. This benign occupier charted the course of the new Japan, which today is a world economic Power, a peaceful and vibrant democracy that has made enormous contributions to the well-being of developing countries and the United Nations system.

Allow me now to share with the Assembly my Government's concern on some key international issues — the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq.

First, we commend Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his courage in disengaging from Gaza. We hope that this is only a first step towards the full implementation of the road map leading to the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State. The new Palestinian leaders and people deserve equal praise for their moderation and statesmanship, patience and tolerance.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, local extremist elements and foreign mercenaries continue their campaign of terror to reverse the democratic gains made by the people of the two countries. The international community and, in particular, the neighbouring countries, have a special duty to provide all necessary support to the brave peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq in their struggle to consolidate their hard-won freedoms; the neighbouring countries must do more to prevent their territories from being used as springboards for the infiltration of mercenaries and weapons into Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on The Honourable Laurie Chan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Solomon Islands.

Mr. Chan (Solomon Islands): I bring warm greetings, Sir, from the Government and people of Solomon Islands, and I wish to congratulate the President on his election to lead the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I would like to assure him of Solomon Islands' support and cooperation during his term in office as he guides the work of the Assembly over the next 12 months.

My delegation would also like to commend and register its deep appreciation to his predecessor, our colleague, the Honourable Jean Ping, Foreign Minister of Gabon, for his invaluable contribution and able leadership of the proceedings of fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Solomon Islands also extends its gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his vision, dedication and leadership in making the United Nations relevant and responsive to today's threats.

This Organization rose out of the ashes of the Second World War with the sole purpose of ensuring that never again would the world allow crimes against humanity to flourish. Sixty years on, genocide, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and hunger continue to claim millions of lives annually. According to a recent World Health Organization report, preventable disease, such as malaria, claims more lives than today's conflicts put together. Of 300 to 500 million clinical cases annually, 1.5 to 2.7 million lives are lost. In this connection, Solomon Islands suffers higher rates of malaria and maternal mortality than any other country in the Pacific region. My delegation is pleased to see the summit agree on the establishment and implementation of "quick win" initiatives, such as free distribution of treated bed nets and antimalarial medicines. But more needs to be done; a comprehensive malaria eradication programme on public and environmental health must be initiated and implemented simultaneously.

Despite these overwhelming facts, the world continues to spend even more on military programmes and equipment. The lack of progress on disarmament and non-proliferation, with the continuing threat of terrorism, begs the question as to whether the world has indeed become safer, more stable and protected, as the founders of the United Nations Charter envisioned. It further raises the question whether international frameworks and cooperation agreements have, in fact, contained today's threats.

Solomon Islands condemns terrorism in all its forms. In this regard, we are embarking on a legislative process, with New Zealand's support, to increase our national capacity in enhancing regional security arrangements through the Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security and the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation, particularly as concerns threats posed by international terrorism and transnational crimes.

In keeping with this year's theme, "For a stronger and more effective United Nations: the follow-up and implementation of the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005", we are faced with the challenge of continuing the reform process. As my Prime Minister pointed out last week during the high-level summit, we must not solve today's problems with yesterday's solutions, but rather with a new vision that will build a stronger multilateral system to confront threats and challenges in the twenty-first century. Solomon Islands notes and supports the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) as a starting point for change.

Current reforms to rejuvenate the multilateral system must occur at three levels — international, regional and national. The forthcoming Doha process, beginning in December of this year, will provide another opportunity for the international community to equitably spread the fruits of globalization, take to task the imbalance that exists within the economic international system and address the challenges of vulnerable and fragile States. The Doha development agenda must accord stable and predictable market access to all least developed countries' products, technology transfer and human resources development. For Solomon Islands to share the fruits of the multilateral trading system in a meaningful way, it must first address the domestic bottlenecks that impede its full participation, such as supply-side restraints and other "behind-the-door" complementary policies that are not conducive to a business-friendly environment.

The Brussels Declaration and the Programme for Action for the Least Developed Countries will be reviewed beginning next year. The lack of implementation of the Brussels Programme speaks of the international community's commitment to 700 million of the world's most vulnerable persons. Solomon Islands is off track in terms of meeting its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) obligation; however, as a least developed country in the Asia/Pacific region, it is committed to meeting its MDGs and seeks international support and attention in this endeavour. Poverty has no boundaries, and we acknowledge and support the Jakarta Declaration. For the MDGs and other benefits to be realized and sustained, Solomon Islands will need to grow its economy. Solomon Islands also calls for a greater in-country presence on the part of the United Nations to work in partnership with us to meet the Goals.

Solomon Islands supports the proposal to establish the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission will play a difficult and important role in assisting countries that are emerging from conflict situations to reintegrate, reconstruct and rebuild State institutions in order to maintain peace, security and

economic stability. In that light, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a shining example from which the Commission could draw lessons. It has demonstrated that, with courage and determination, the principles and institutions of democracy and human rights can be safeguarded and protected. A two-pronged approach of law and order complemented by economic security and carried out in the spirit of true partnership will create an opportunity for peace to prosper. Solomon Islands also welcomes the Assembly's endorsement of the concept of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as contained in the summit's outcome document.

Solomon Islands would like to express its deep appreciation to Australia, New Zealand and our good friends and neighbours, the Pacific Island countries for their continued support and contribution to Regional Assistance Mission. We could not have done it without them, and I thank them.

Solomon Islands needs to progress beyond the initial crisis of law and order, but the challenge remains to nurture the country and build an economy to sustain it. Per capita income in Solomon Islands has currently dropped to more than 20 per cent below the 1995 level. To repair that situation, Solomon Islands must address harmful past policies of economic mismanagement, a lack of fiscal discipline, faulty governance and capacity constraints at all levels.

Solomon Islands is well endowed with natural resources and a young population that can form the basis of a good labour supply, but it lacks both human capital and physical capital, with poor infrastructure to lift productivity and deliver sustainable growth that is broad-based, rurally focused and people-centred.

That is why the Government is initiating a strategy to attract and build capital. The strategy hinges on establishing a stable macroeconomic environment, creating simple business-friendly tax and regulatory regimes and improving infrastructure and good governance. With respect to establishing a credible fiscal policy, we have returned the budget to surpluses. Revenues have been enhanced. Expenditures have been tightened and prioritized. Monetary policies are being fine-tuned and aligned. State-owned enterprises continue to be reformed, with steps taken to remove barriers and improve efficient shipping networks, which are critical for island nations. Those initiatives will be coupled with a new draft investment law, a credible budget for 2006 and the introduction of a fair and simple tax reform bill, which will be submitted to the Parliament at its next sitting.

Debt levels remain crippling, amounting to more than 100 per cent of the gross domestic product of the Solomon Islands. Talks with creditors have begun to establish a workable debt strategy. The innovative approach advocated by the Philippines of a debt-for-equity swap to finance MDG projects is worth looking into.

Capacity-building in governance that is free from corruption is vital for rural development, health and education. Leadership and governance, which are critical for stability and economic development, are being improved by clarifying rules and expectations and by adopting an outcome-oriented approach. That will improve the transparency of public processes and the effectiveness of institutions.

Solomon Islands acknowledges the contributions of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Japan, the European Union, Taiwan, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, among other donor partners, in support of Government initiatives to rebuild our fragile and shattered State. Solomon Islands must consolidate the gains achieved in the past two years on the security and economic fronts and move forward constructively. Much is yet to be done.

On climate change, the world continues to experience changing weather patterns and has seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Small island developing States (SIDS), such as Solomon Islands, are more vulnerable and susceptible to natural disasters, and we call for the international community to renew its focus on, and concrete commitment to, the issue of climate change, in line with the summit's outcome document. My delegation welcomes the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February this year and calls on those countries that have not yet ratified the Protocol to do so at their earliest convenience.

In the light of the Asian tsunami of last December, it would be cost-effective for the world to invest in mitigation measures, in particular renewable energy resources. The Hyogo strategy of the Kobe Conference and the Mauritius Strategy of January this year provide an excellent starting point. Sadly, however, the Group of Eight meeting on climate

change did not take decisive action. For that reason, Solomon Islands, as a member of the Alliance of Small Island States, urges the Group of Eight to reconsider the issue, because the environment has an impact on the physical survival of small island developing States.

Closer to home, Solomon Islands wishes to acknowledge the completion of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, with the successful election in Papua New Guinea's newly autonomous province of Bougainville. We wish our closest Melanesian neighbour every success in building on the political gains made so far, and we assure Bougainville of our commitment to all bilateral cooperative arrangements. Solomon Islands also acknowledges Papua New Guinea's ongoing bilateral assistance to Solomon Islands.

With respect to Security Council reform, Solomon Islands believes that the membership of the Council should reflect the political and economic realities of our time. In that regard, Solomon Islands supports the expansion of the Security Council and feels that a country such as Japan, which has strong bilateral links with Solomon Islands, should be accorded a permanent seat on the Council. Japan's inclusion will contribute to bridging the divide between the multilateral institutions and Member States.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The results have been mixed. Solomon Islands believes that improving the welfare of women is an indispensable requirement for sustainable security. At the regional level, issues relating to the empowerment of women are being incorporated into the Pacific Plan, which will be discussed by Pacific Islands Forum leaders in October this year.

The United Nations was founded on the principle of maintaining international peace and security. Over the years, some threats continue to receive more attention than others. The Anti-Secession Law enacted by the People's Republic of China in March this year has threatened peace and security on the Taiwan Strait. The situation creates a security vacuum that, if left unattended, will continue to fester and will put in question the credibility of this premier multilateral institution. There is no mechanism to address such threats within the parameters of the United Nations Charter.

Solomon Islands therefore renews its call to have the issue debated in the General Assembly. The time has now come for this body to allow Taiwan, a major player in the international economic system, to take its rightful place in the United Nations. The Assembly cannot continue to ignore the plight of the 23 million people of Taiwan. Solomon Islands regrets the manner in which the Assembly has dealt with the issue, allowing certain countries to dictate the agenda.

With respect to the reform of the Secretariat, Solomon Islands would like to see the Secretariat reflect the diversity of its membership. The current recruitment process of having external, rather than in-country, examinations has deterred potential applicants from small island developing States from applying, given the associated expenses.

In conclusion, Solomon Islands supports multilateralism, and I assure the President of our ongoing support for United Nations reform.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Salome Zourabichvili, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Mrs. Zourabichvili (Georgia) (*spoke in French*): I should first like to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election as President at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I assure him of my delegation's full support for the important work to be accomplished at this session. I would also like to extend my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping for his tireless efforts and vision for change he has demonstrated so amply during his presidency.

(*spoke in English*)

Our Organization is now at a turning point in its history. Sixty years after its founding, having confronted many challenges, faced many threats, been defied by so many conflicts, the United Nations is now entering the twenty-first century with the obligation to reform itself.

The bipolar world has come to an end, and new threats of a global nature have emerged: international terrorism, conflicts of a different breed, development and global environmental challenges. I want here to renew to the delegation of the United States of America a message of solidarity from the Georgian people in the face of the New Orleans tragedy. Our Organization has no other choice but to adapt, to find new instruments and to establish a renewed credibility, which can only be based on a proven efficiency, results and visible effects. Words do not suffice; deeds are expected from us all.

We consider the outcome document adopted by the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting as a substantial step in the right direction. This document deals with all the real issues that, as we all know, are going to define tomorrow's world and affect our Organization's fate.

Whether we are talking about eradication of poverty, consolidation of peace and security, protection of human rights, protection of displaced persons, need for an effective system of peacekeeping and for a coherent approach to peacebuilding, negative effects of transnational crime, responsibility to protect populations from ethnic cleansing or whether we reaffirm the absolute necessity of a dialogue among cultures and civilizations, all these challenges are of direct relevance for my country.

For Georgia, these threats are not words, these ills are not theory, they are daily realities and directly experienced tragedies. Our support for an effective reform is not a rhetorical stand. Our vital interests are at stake; the future of my country is at stake. Georgia is directly experimenting on its soil the consequences of so-called frozen conflicts. Frozen conflicts lead to the freezing of the economic development of these separatist regions. They freeze the democratic development of the society in those regions. They isolate them and close them, transforming them into outlaws, "black holes" where all kinds of trafficking and criminal activities, possibly including terrorist activities, could develop outside our control or any form of control, outside any law.

Frozen conflicts, as well as active conflicts, call for the development of a real capacity of the United Nations for effective involvement through instruments of peacebuilding. For many years the United Nations has been dealing with the Abkhazian conflict, but unfortunately it has not managed to obtain effective results. It has proved unable to this day to deploy the small police component that was decided upon, unable to implement fully its own resolutions, unable to deploy an effective peacekeeping capability, unable to monitor the human rights violations that are occurring daily and frequently.

Gradually, despite the United Nations, despite regular meetings of the Security Council, and despite the Secretary-General's Group of Friends of Georgia, a regime of apartheid prevails under which Georgians are excluded and forbidden to go back to their land and their homes, and a process of covert annexation is taking place. Thus, Abkhazia will be a litmus test of the renewed efficiency of our Organization, of its capacity to monitor effectively, to manage peacekeeping operations without having to delegate its responsibilities to third parties and to enact finally strategies of effective peacebuilding.

In the case of the South Ossetian conflict in Georgia, we have a similar situation. The President of Georgia has presented two mutually reinforcing peace proposals within a year. One proposal introduced last year before this Assembly set out the three phases for ending the conflict: demilitarization, economic rehabilitation and political dialogue. In December 2004, it was complemented by a full-fledged proposal on a status of broad autonomy, prepared together with the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) and presented to the Council of Europe. But peace plans are not enough. We now need a mechanism through which the international community will effectively support initiatives and policies that are directed towards peaceful resolution of conflicts.

For all these reasons, we are taking the outlines of the new document very seriously and want to see it fully developed and implemented. We welcome and support the creation of an initial operating capability for a standing police capacity. This is a very right step in the very right direction. We welcome the creation of a Human Rights Council. This new body should be more representative, should comply with the highest standards of objectivity and should avoid double standards as well as omissions or silences. An effective monitoring system should be put into place. The strengthening of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights is also a step in the right direction.

We welcome the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission that will develop integrated strategies for post-conflict rehabilitation and recovery. We also need a more effective framework for moving smoothly from peacemaking to peacebuilding, while developing an all-inclusive and coherent strategy within which the United Nations will fully assume its responsibilities. The new Peacebuilding Commission should be fully representative of the countries that have been or are the most directly affected by conflicts. Also, given the special fate of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations, gender representation should be given additional attention. "Representation is essential", "Knowledge is key" — as we, female foreign

ministers, have mentioned in our letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly.

Finally, Georgia supports the reform and revitalization of the Security Council — a more effective and efficient, more democratic, more transparent body is called for. Georgia supports the enlargement proposals in order to give non-permanent members a better chance to contribute to major decisions. Transparency and improved decision-making procedures are a must. Georgia is convinced that if there is an adequate political will, the relevant agreement on a reformed Security Council can be reached at the present session of the General Assembly. This is our wish. Moreover, this is a necessity. Our credibility is at stake.

Today not only the United Nations but all the major international organizations are going through a difficult process of adjustment, of renewal and reappraisal. That is the case of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Some will survive and grow stronger. Some will have to yield ground to other forums that are more flexible, less bureaucratic and more in line with today's realities.

The United Nations has today started an invaluable process of readjustment and rejuvenation. If our work is successful, this process will go to its term.

The United Nations will cease to be a mere forum for calling for peaceful solutions; it will become the instrument the world needs, the instrument for resolving the conflicts that tarnish the image of today's global world, the instrument for effectively responding to the newer global threats that endanger our development and our stability.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Klaus Scharioth, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Scharioth (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): Please accept my congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this historic sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I wish you every success. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the outgoing President for his dedicated work at the fifty-ninth session. I endorse the statement of the European Union (EU) presidency.

The debate at last week's summit highlighted one important point, namely, that peace, development, security and human rights are inseparably linked. One cannot address human rights and security without also addressing development. All of those issues are at the very heart of our policies.

People are waiting for our solutions to the pressing problems of development. We must achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Of that we are acutely aware, both in Germany and in Europe. The EU plan to reach the 0.7 per cent official development assistance goal by 2015, and the Group-of Eight (G-8) commitments made at Gleneagles, substantially strengthen the financial basis of our work.

We are also willing to forge new paths by making use of innovative financing mechanisms.

At the same time, frameworks establishing fair conditions for international trade are a prerequisite if poorer States are to share the benefits of globalization. The EU is leading the way with its "Everything But Arms" initiative, which grants the least developed countries duty-free and quota-free market access. In that context, we must do all we can to make the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong in December, a success. Only in that way can we bring the Doha round negotiations to a successful conclusion.

We also know that excessive indebtedness curbs growth and development. The realignment of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative after 1999 has considerably reduced the indebtedness of some 27 States. Germany has to date forgiven €6.5 billion of debt and has earmarked a further €4 billion for the continuation of the HIPC initiative.

Debt relief is, however, dependent on all creditors spreading the burden fairly among themselves. We are alarmed by the fact that commercial and State creditors outside the Paris Club are doing less and less to live up to their responsibilities. I would like to seize this opportunity to call for your support at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Bretton Woods institutions, for the G-8 proposal and for an extensive cancellation of debts — including multilateral debts — for the countries concerned.

All of the foregoing emphasizes the great importance we attach to the global partnership for

development. That partnership is not, however, a one-way street. It also requires a commitment by partner States to put in place the conditions for development — that is, democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and anti-corruption measures.

Climate protection and development are also closely intertwined. Of course, everyone must have access to energy. Nevertheless, all States must do their part to prevent the ominous advance of climate change. In late November the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol will meet in Montreal. There, we will have the opportunity to adopt effective mechanisms to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases beyond 2012. That is precisely the policy pursued by the Kyoto Protocol, and it is a policy we will adhere to.

This year two natural catastrophes — the tsunami in the Indian Ocean and Hurricane Katrina in the United States of America — have clearly demonstrated just how vulnerable our societies are to natural disasters. We have all learned just how important disaster prevention is. As host to the Third International Conference on Early Warning, which will be held in Bonn in March 2006, Germany hopes to contribute to making better use of and improving early warning mechanisms and thereby limiting the scale of the damage caused by such disasters. Here I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our invitation to all Member States to join us in making the Bonn Conference a success.

For years, United Nations engagement has been hailed all over the world as a welcome sign of protection and assistance, of peace and reconstruction. Last Sunday saw the first free parliamentary elections in Afghanistan under the new Constitution. The Government of Afghanistan, with a full complement of democratically legitimated institutions, is now prepared to assume responsibility for the further reconstruction of the country. By going to the polls, millions of women and men in Afghanistan have proved that they have opted for democracy. Our thanks go to the United Nations, which worked hard to make those elections possible.

In his latest report on Afghanistan (A/60/224) the Secretary-General announced that the United Nations will remain committed to assisting the country after the elections. I heartily endorse that commitment; such help is indispensable. For even if the Bonn process, launched four years ago, has now been brought to a successful conclusion, the international community will still need to stand by Afghanistan. Germany, too, will continue to do its utmost to support the country.

The President returned to the Chair.

Ten years after the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement, and six years after the end of the Kosovo conflict, the situation in the Western Balkans has improved tangibly. Nonetheless, major progress is still required in the political, legal and economic fields. The people of that region must genuinely come to terms with their past, and the parties to the conflict must be reconciled. In that connection, we call for full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

The Middle East still faces great challenges. As its neighbours, we in Europe have a strategic interest in peace and stability in the region. We are convinced that only through reform, the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law can lasting stability be guaranteed. The free and fair parliamentary elections in Palestine and Lebanon are encouraging signs of change.

The Middle East peace process has also gained new momentum over past months. We emphatically welcome the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern part of the West Bank. Now it is vital that Israelis, Palestinians and the international community do all they can to lay the foundations for political and economic stability in the Gaza Strip. Efforts should be focused on a two-State solution based on the road map. The objective remains a viable Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders.

The international community is united in its determination to help Iraq establish democracy and the rule of law. We want all Iraqis to be able to live free from fear and material hardship. The forces of terror and violence must not and shall not be permitted to win the upper hand. The Middle East needs a stable, prosperous Iraq.

Here, too, the United Nations is making its contribution towards the process of political transition and reconstruction. That is why we have provided considerable financial assistance for the protection force whose presence allows the United Nations to work in Iraq. It is also why Germany has, at Iraq's request, advised that country on constitutional issues.

The Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a major cause of concern. Past violations of international obligations, a lack of transparency in its actions, and insufficient cooperation with subsequent investigations have destroyed any confidence that the programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. With support from the EU High Representative, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have worked with Iran on finding a way to restore confidence. Those efforts have received broad support from the international community. Tehran's continued disregard of International Atomic Energy Agency decisions, however, is further weakening that confidence and the gains made to date are being put at risk for no good reason. We should emphasize that our concerns do not relate to Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This has never been and will not be put in question. Our concerns do not relate to Iran's right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. That has never been and will not be called into question.

We remain prepared to work on solutions which include objective guarantees that the Iranian nuclear programme can serve only peaceful ends. I appeal to Iran to refrain from taking unilateral measures and to return to the negotiating table.

There is general agreement that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is now more than ever a life-threatening risk to us all. It is thus all the more regrettable that no consensus could be reached on the inclusion in the outcome document of a chapter on non-proliferation and disarmament. If we want to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular of nuclear weapons, all States must fulfil their obligations. At the same time, new momentum must be brought to the process of nuclear disarmament.

In that context, I welcome the latest progress made by the six-party talks towards resolving the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. It is a vital first step.

Africa is in many ways a touchstone for and an example of an effective multilateral system. The close cooperation of the United Nations with the African Union, as well as with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has had a beneficial impact in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and, recently, in Burundi. The United Nations is also playing an equally important role in efforts to stabilize the Great Lakes region.

Following the death of John Garang, the peace process in the Sudan requires an even greater commitment by all parties to implement the historic Nairobi peace agreement. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), to which Germany has contributed personnel, is making a major contribution. However, we must not neglect other crisis areas, in particular Darfur. The African Union mission in Darfur has helped to stabilize the security situation in the area where it is stationed.

The variety of problems facing us — poverty, social polarization, global population growth, inadequate water supplies and global climate change, to name only the most pressing — serves to highlight the need for concerted action. We must prepare the United Nations for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Over the past 12 months, reform of the United Nations has been intensively debated. Member States, the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General himself have provided valuable input. Some of their proposals are contained in the outcome document adopted at last week's world summit.

However, only when we have managed to implement those proposals will we be able to speak of true achievement. To be a success, the process requires the active participation of all Member States.

The tasks that the summit has set the General Assembly must be tackled with speed and focus. At this session, the General Assembly must make a breakthrough towards the adoption of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It must also work on the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission.

Sustainable peace requires more than merely restoring security. The post-conflict peacebuilding phase is particularly crucial. The sooner reconstruction can begin, and the better coordinated the peacemaking and post-conflict recovery efforts are, the better the chances of lasting stabilization. The summit took a vital step in that direction by deciding to establish the Peacebuilding Commission by the end of the year.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report entitled "In larger freedom", states that:

> "No security agenda and no drive for development will be successful unless they are based on ... respect for human dignity". (*A/59/2005, para. 128*)

If we wish to lend greater weight to the protection and promotion of human rights, we must also strengthen the relevant United Nations bodies and mechanisms.

Germany therefore welcomes the decision taken by the summit to create a Human Rights Council which will replace the Commission on Human Rights. The General Assembly must now move fast to define the mandate and structures of the Human Rights Council. It must ensure that the new body enjoys greater legitimacy than its predecessor and that its working methods are more effective, especially when it comes to responding to acute crises.

Allow me a last word. A glance at the trouble spots around the world makes it clear that we, the international community, face far more conflicts in the South than we do in the North. Key decisions on settling those conflicts are taken in the Security Council which, under the Charter of the United Nations, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace. Its composition, however, still reflects the world of 1945 and not that of the twenty-first century. Adjusting and expanding the membership of the Security Council by adding both permanent and non-permanent members thus remains essential. Any reform of the United Nations that does not include reform of the Security Council is not worthy of the name.

The Security Council is in danger of losing its authority and legitimacy as long as entire continents and major contributors are not adequately represented. Germany and its partners Brazil, India and Japan therefore have submitted a proposal on reform of the Council. It is the only proposal that includes a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and its working methods. We are convinced that it is the only proposal capable of obtaining the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.

Reform of the Security Council is an indispensable part of the overhaul of the United Nations. In last week's summit document, we all pledged to swiftly advance those reforms. We do not need only progress; we need results. The time is ripe for radical reform. Let us use this session of the General Assembly to finally resolve this issue, which is so vital to the future of the United Nations.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oskaras Jusys, Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): Lithuania welcomes this effort — the most extensive and ambitious ever made — to renew the United Nations. We must ensure that the summit commitments we all have undertaken are implemented and that they produce real and tangible results, in order to improve the Organization's capacity to act adequately, effectively, expeditiously and in the best interests of us all. Their implementation should also enable us to give hope to the vulnerable and the destitute and to make the world a better place for all.

We welcome the affirmation by the outcome document of the inextricable link between development, security and human rights. That, in our view, is a sine qua non for all our future actions. We welcome the reaffirmation of the commitments regarding the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. As a member State of the European Union, we are proud of the Union's commitment to double its overall aid level by the year 2010, including a considerable increase in aid to Africa.

We support the establishment of a Democracy Fund for countries seeking to establish or strengthen their democratic practices. In our view, that Fund will contribute to maximizing the impact of development assistance by focusing on the improvement of governance standards. Transparent and democratic governance practices can make quite a difference in the performance of countries that are otherwise quite similar in terms of their natural resources and social structure.

We emphasize the role of international trade in promoting economic growth and development and thus in fighting poverty. We therefore add our voice to calls for a rapid, ambitious and development-oriented completion of the Doha trade round.

Furthermore, Lithuania is convinced that all development and all relevant related strategies should have a built-in element of environmental sustainability. We welcome the language of the outcome document to that effect but believe that we should go further.

In particular, we underline the importance of going beyond Kyoto by initiating negotiations on the development of a more inclusive and equitable international framework for climate change beyond the year 2012.

Lithuania welcomes the strong and unconditional condemnation of terrorism in the outcome document.

We call on the General Assembly to complete, at its sixtieth session, work on a comprehensive convention on terrorism and on a global counter-terrorism strategy, as proposed by the Secretary-General earlier this year.

We strongly welcome the endorsement of "responsibility to protect" populations from genocide, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. This is of fundamental importance; it is an important step that gives us hope that we shall no longer look away nor stand idly by as entire populations are being killed.

Lithuania fully supports the proposals regarding United Nations management reform. We hope the blueprint to be submitted by the Secretary-General will not fall victim to endless debates by Member States but, rather, lead to tangible changes, improving the Organization's accountability, transparency, efficiency and professionalism, while assuring the highest ethical standards.

Too often in the past, we have seen nations emerging from conflict lapse into disruption and chaos, thus destabilizing entire regions. We therefore call for rapid progress in making the Peacebuilding Commission fully operational before the end of this year.

While expressing our satisfaction with the agreement to double resources for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, we urge all nations to take conclusive decisions in the coming months on the basis of the wording agreed to by the vast majority of countries in establishing a robust and effective Human Rights Council.

At the same time, we have to admit that the outcome document is lacking considerably in some areas. We are well aware that the reform process is not a one-time event. As we proceed along the path of United Nations reform, we must make sure these areas are not left out.

First, there is the issue of impunity. The fight against impunity and the rendering of justice must be part and parcel of our common efforts to improve the human rights situation worldwide. We stress our support for the International Criminal Court, as well as the existing ad hoc and mixed criminal tribunals and other mechanisms for international justice.

Secondly, there is the question of Security Council reform which cannot be delayed further, especially if we really care about restoring the authority and credibility of the United Nations. The Council's working methods must be improved to provide greater input from non-member States. Its membership must be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, with due consideration being paid to equitable geographical representation and the recent emergence of new international actors and contributors. Lithuania has long supported the candidacies of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the Security Council. We appreciate the aspirations of India and Brazil to undertake the honourable responsibility of permanent membership, and we agree that Africa's representation in both categories of membership is long overdue.

After 11 years of debate on the issue of Security Council reform, it is time to admit that we are unlikely to produce new arguments without repeating ourselves indefinitely. Lithuania, therefore, calls on all Member States to assume their responsibilities and to take action.

Finally, let me touch upon the failure to agree, in the outcome document, on the issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. This is the major failure of our summit, especially in the light of the unfortunate conclusion of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference earlier this year. We must honour our earlier agreements and obligations, restore consensus and invest all our efforts in search of agreement on this crucial issue. We therefore call on all nations to rally around the initiative put forward by Norway and a group of like-minded countries; we believe this initiative could become a basis of viable consensus and future cooperative action.

Last December, we witnessed an unprecedented outburst of solidarity with the Asian tsunami victims. These past few weeks, our hearts were with the people of the United States, whose citizens saw their lives shattered and whole communities destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. We offered whatever assistance we could to those affected and we extend our condolences to all those who have suffered from this enormous devastation.

In moments of grief and sorrow, we are one. Pain has no nationality, no religion, no race. Similarly, we should all be one in our solidarity. We should not have to wait for new cataclysms and large-scale tragedies in order to agree on the need to build a renewed United Nations for the new century. As Secretary-General

Kofi Annan has repeatedly noted, in this globalized, interrelated world, it is the collective interest that is often in our best national interest.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Williams (United Kingdom): I would like to respond to the remarks made today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain about Gibraltar. The British Government welcomes and shares Spain's willingness to work in a constructive spirit. We agree that issues relating to Gibraltar can only be resolved through dialogue and, therefore, welcome the newly established trilateral forum on Gibraltar, to which all parties, including Gibraltar, can express their views.

Our aim remains to build a better future for the people of Gibraltar and, in doing that, the United Kingdom Government stands by its long-term commitment to the people of Gibraltar to respect their wishes.

Mr. Sadeghi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the General Assembly heard a number of unsubstantiated allegations about my country from the representative of the Israeli regime, a regime that has been based on violence, occupation, corruption, state terrorism and bloodshed.

Israel, throughout its entire dark history, and ever since its inception, has suffered profoundly from a lack of legitimacy. So it is not surprising that the representative of such a regime — ruled constantly by those who are culprits in various crimes against humanity and war crimes — makes such baseless, fabricated propaganda the remedy for its illegitimacy.

It is an open secret that Israel has continuously and purposely violated many international laws and norms, as well as dozens of United Nations resolutions to which the response of this illegitimate and irresponsible regime has been nothing but complete defiance. In this context, particular reference can be made to the mischievous policy of the Israeli regime on the nuclear issue, which is a showcase of its concealment and unabated pursuance of a nuclear arsenal during the past decades. It is indisputable that such an ill-intentioned policy has been threatening the peace and security of the volatile Middle East region for years. In fact, the Israeli nuclear danger and its missile capability, coupled with its wicked behaviour and satanic intentions, present a real threat, not only to regional peace and security but also to the whole world.

Therefore, this threat needs to be urgently and decisively addressed by the international community. Indeed, this regime should face a united front and be kept under continuous pressure to relinquish its nuclear programme and to place all its nuclear facilities under international monitoring. It is worth mentioning that the only existing obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the non-adherence of this regime to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its continued, clandestine operation of unsafe guarded nuclear facilities, with the help and technological assistance from a certain State. This regime has paid no attention to the constant international call in different forums, particularly in the 2000 NPT Review Conference which, by name, called upon this regime to accede to the NPT immediately and without any conditions.

Moreover, the said regime has never been a party to the international instruments on weapons of mass destruction — namely, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the NPT.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a party to the CWC, BWC and NPT, is committed to all provisions of those instruments and, while remaining transparent through making declarations and accepting international monitoring and inspection by the competent international bodies, in particular the International Atomic Energy Agency, has always stated that it would not abandon its right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology due to politically motivated accusations.

The baseless allegations and the statement of the representative of the Zionist regime in the Assembly today demonstrate clearly that those who are putting my country under growing, unreasonable and unfair pressure are in fact trying to serve the interests of the illegitimate Israeli regime. We believe that the

international community is well aware of that ploy and will therefore not give in to pressure aimed at protecting the illegal policies and practices of the Zionist regime and its illegitimate interests.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): I just wanted — and I feel pretty confident that I am doing it on behalf of many in this Hall — to express our appreciation for a lecture on human rights, world terror and nuclear proliferation from one of the world's greatest experts in that field.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

United Nations A/60/PV.17

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

17th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 2005, 6.50 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 6.50 p.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Report of the General Committee (A/60/250 and Corr.1)

The President: May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the Committee. In that section, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 2 and 3.

May I request the General Assembly to now direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, rationalization of work, opening and closing dates for the session, schedule of meetings, the general debate, conduct of the meetings, and so on. All of those recommendations concern established practice, so rather than going through them one by one, I believe it would be better and more efficient that we address all of these organizational matters concerning the General Assembly as a whole.

As there are no comments on that approach, we shall proceed accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that it is requested to take note of and to approve all the recommendations that the General Committee has made in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President: Having just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 16 of section II, I should like to remind members that, during the final week of Ramadan, from 31 October to 4 November 2005, when local time will be Eastern Standard Time, the hours of the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Main Committees will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the latest.

Having also just adopted the recommendation in paragraph 20 on waiving the requirements of rule 67 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly to declare a meeting open, I should like to endorse the practical suggestion that has been made at previous sessions: that each delegation designate someone to be present in the meeting rooms at the scheduled time.

Next, I invite the Assembly to turn its attention to section III of the memorandum, entitled "Observations on the organization of the work of the General Assembly".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in that section, concerning the timely submission of draft proposals for the review of their programme budget implications?

It was so decided.

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05-51428 (E)

The President: May I now invite members to turn their attention to section IV dealing with the adoption of the agenda. The question of allocation of items will be dealt with subsequently in section V.

In section IV, the General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 48 to 53.

In paragraph 54, the General Assembly is informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date its consideration of the inclusion of item 18 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte".

In paragraph 55, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 39 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", be deferred to the sixty-first session and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: With respect to paragraph 56, the General Committee decided not to recommend the inclusion of item 42 of the draft agenda.

In paragraph 57, in connection with item 74 of the draft agenda, "Holocaust remembrance", the General Committee recommends that item 74 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading D, "Promotion of human rights".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 58, in connection with item 156 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Latin American Integration Association in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends its inclusion in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organization, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 59, in connection with item 157 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Common Fund for Commodities in the Gen Assembly", the General Committee recommends inclusion in the agenda of the current session un heading I.

May I take it that the Assembly approves recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: With respect to paragraph 60, General Committee decided not to recommend inclusion of item 158 of the draft agenda.

With regard to the proposal made by the Vi Chairperson of the Third Committee concerning consideration of the matters raised in the letter da 26 November 2004 from the Chairman of the Th Committee to the President of the General Assembly the fifty-ninth session, the General Committee deci to postpone to a later date consideration of the iss raised in that letter.

We turn now to the agenda which the Gene Committee recommends in paragraph 61 of its rep for adoption by the General Assembly, taking i account the decisions just adopted on items 18, 39, 74, 156 to 158 of the draft agenda, and concerning letter of the Third Committee.

Bearing in mind that the agenda is now organi under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion items under each heading as a whole. I should like remind members once again that, at present, we are discussing the substance of any item.

I give the floor to the representative of Solom Islands.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): My delegati wishes to refer to document A/60/250 and to regis its disappointment in the manner in which the Gene Committee discussed the issue of the agenda. Solom Islands, among other countries, was actually denied t opportunity to debate the inclusion of certain items the agenda, and feels that the United Nations must least have a mechanism in place to provide for the f and equal participation of all Member States.

Rulings by the Chair to limit speakers provisional agenda item 56 in the current worki paper and item 60 denied the right of Member States speak on the issue. In that regard, Solomon Islan feels that the principles of democracy and universali were not respected. Those principles should not

challenged, but rather protected and upheld. At times, my delegation feels, the Secretariat tends to dictate and impose on States, putting on paper rules that restrict countries from presenting their views, indirectly marginalizing them from the process that they should be part of.

My delegation feels that, so long as we take such an approach, this Assembly will pick and choose which threats to discuss and which to sweep under the carpet. Solomon Islands hopes that the approach taken by the General Committee this year in discussing the two items must not and should not set a precedent for future General Committee working methods.

I wish to close by assuring you, Sir, of Solomon Islands' continued support during your term in office.

The President: The statement of the representative of Solomon Islands is duly noted.

Referring to that very special situation, I want to make the point that, in view of the summit meeting, which was imminent at the time, the limitation of speakers was very much due to the enormous time pressures under which we were then working, with delegations on their way out to the airport and the very special conditions that existed before the summit. The limitation was the recommendation of the General Committee members, whom I am there to serve and chair.

I thank the representative of Solomon Islands for the continued confidence that he expressed.

Items 1 to 3 and 8 have already been dealt with.

We turn to items 4 to 7. May I take it that those items are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Gambia.

Mr. Fal (Gambia): I want to make an intervention on the statement you just made, Sir, concerning the reason why item 42 of the provisional agenda was not included in the agenda of the sixtieth session. In that connection, I want to clarify the fact that the time constraint due to the High-level Plenary Meeting was the sole reason that debate on the two Taiwan-related issues was cut short. The limitations on the number of speakers, as well as on the time allocated to each statement as adopted by the General Committee on 13 September, should in no way set a precedent for future debates on those issues. The right of every State Member of the United Nations to raise issues of concern to the international community should therefore be recognized and reaffirmed.

I want to call members' attention to the fact that the General Committee had actually decided to shorten the debate on the two proposals listed under items 42 and 158 in the provisional agenda regarding the situation in the Taiwan Strait.

The President: The statement of the representative of Gambia is duly noted.

We turn now to the inclusion of the items listed under heading A, "Maintenance of international peace and security".

May I take it that the items listed under heading A are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

We come now to heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading C, "Development of Africa".

May I take it that the item listed under that heading is included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we come to heading D, "Promotion of human rights".

May I take it that the items listed under heading D are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading E is entitled "Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Now we turn to heading G, "Disarmament".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations".

May I take it that the items listed under that heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters".

May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to section V of the report of the General Committee on allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 62 to 64.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to also take note of the information contained in paragraph 64 concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 66 to 70. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 61 of the report before us in document A/60/250.

We turn first to paragraphs 66 (a) to (l) relating to plenary meetings.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. O'Brien (United States of America): The United States will not participate in the adoption of this section of the report of the General Committee. We note that paragraph 66 (j) does not follow past practice in accurately reflecting what transpired in the Committee, and are pleased that a corrigendum has been issued.

The United States will not support the adoption of this section because we do not agree with the allocation of the item on the International Criminal Court (ICC) directly to the plenary. If the General Assembly is to consider that technical legal item, it should do so in the Legal Committee, as it has for the past 15 years. To move the item to the plenary would be to ignore efforts to reform and rationalize the work of the General Assembly. That is the basis for our objection to the proposed allocation.

The International Court of Justice, established by the Charter as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, reports directly to the plenary, as do the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, established by the Security Council as subsidiary bodies of that principal organ. Unlike those judicial Tribunals, the International Criminal Court — a treaty body to which many United Nations Members do not belong — is neither a United Nations organ nor a subsidiary body. It is not appropriate for the ICC item to be sent directly to the plenary, and the United States will not support that recommendation by the General Committee.

The President: I take note of the statement of the representative of the United States.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and approve all of the recommendations of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We now turn to paragraph 67, relating to item 97, "General and complete disarmament".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 68 relating to item 64, "Advancement of women".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraph 69 relating to item 125, "Programme planning".

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to paragraphs 70 (a) and (b).

May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations relating to items 155 and 156, "Observer status for the Latin American Integration Association in the General Assembly" and "Observer status for the Common Fund for Commodities in the General Assembly"?

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now turn to paragraph 71 of the report of the General Committee.

I invite members to turn to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items listed in paragraph 71?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President: We come now to the list of items which the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: We turn now to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Next, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed for the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: Lastly, we come to the list of items which the General Committee recommends for the Sixth Committee.

Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of items proposed to the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Díaz Paniagua (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Having made our decisions, I wish to note that my delegation feels that, in the context of the revitalization of the General Assembly, the agenda items on the law of the sea and criminal justice should have been allocated to the Sixth Committee. As members are aware, my delegation could not make its view prevail in the General Committee. We hope that our proposal will be taken into account in the allocation of items next year.

The President: The statement of the representative of Costa Rica is duly noted.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.

United Nations A/60/PV.18

General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

18th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 21 September 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

International Day of Peace

The President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in the general debate for this morning, I wish to remind members that today, 21 September, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/282 of 7 September 2001, the Assembly is observing the International Day of Peace. A very fine ceremony took place at the Peace Bell this morning, which reminded us of the realities in the world, which we should all bring into this Hall. Let us keep the International Day of Peace in our minds, both today and in the days, months and years to come.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Gül, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Gül (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to convey the condolences of my people to the friendly people of the United States on the tragic loss of life and large-scale destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. This is also a stark reminder of the many other natural and man-made disasters, such as famine in Africa, tsunamis, earthquakes, ecological catastrophes and wide-scale violence and terrorism. They all require sustained international attention and cooperation. Having suffered from similar disasters, Turkey deeply feels for others and stands in solidarity with them.

Upholding the principles of justice, dignity, equality and social progress for the men and women of our world should be the basis of the international order. We must spread justice together with freedom. We cannot rest until we provide prosperity and dignity for every human being. Those principles should guide us in our future efforts.

We have left a very busy period behind, culminating with an important summit. The Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) has encouraged us all to focus on the global problems we face and on the way to achieve positive change. Now is the time to act. We must start implementing what we have agreed upon on issues ranging from peacebuilding to human rights. While doing this, we must not lose sight of our main target: we must reach the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by the year 2015.

With these things in mind, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to start with an accountability pact (see A/60/PV.9). We also welcome your idea, Mr. President, to submit an outline of work for the year ahead related to follow-up of the summit.

A large number of international problems that are high on the United Nations agenda are occurring in our part of the world. These are real issues that closely affect the daily lives of our people. As a country with a

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rich heritage and great international experience, we are working to build a culture of compromise and reconciliation.

Our historical and cultural links to nations in neighbouring regions from Eurasia to the Islamic world and our role as a member of European, trans-Atlantic and Mediterranean institutions will have a positive effect on Turkey's contribution to international relations in the twenty-first century.

It is against that background, and with a sense of confidence, that I take the opportunity to submit to the Assembly's attention Turkey's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2009-2010.

Ongoing reform efforts hold great promise for the improvement of the political, social and economic standards of the Middle East region. We will continue to encourage and assist those local efforts.

Concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is an encouraging development. We would like to witness the same positive trend in the West Bank. Israeli settlement activities in occupied territories must come to an end. The sanctity of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected. The road map should be revived and fully implemented.

Furthermore, we must not let terror and violence derail the process this time. The reform of the Palestinian National Authority must move forward, particularly in the security domain. Efforts to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians have to be intensified. We support the work of Mr. James Wolfensohn, Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement, and are cooperating with him. We believe these efforts will help restore a sense of hope among the Palestinians and ensure security for the Israelis.

In order to integrate the Palestinians with the world, seaports and airports must be built and activated. Border crossings and trade corridors must function smoothly. Freedom of movement must be achieved. Such measures will go a long way towards revitalizing the Palestinian economy. That will encourage the Palestinians to become real partners in peace with the Israelis. Turkey is already actively working with the parties for the realization of this vision. We are determined to continue to contribute in any way we can.

Iraq's destiny and the way the events are unfolding in that country are of crucial importance for peace and stability in the Middle East and beyond. Building a democratic and prosperous Iraq at peace with itself and its neighbours will be possible only if the Iraqi people act as one, in full solidarity and with a clear vision. Ethnic and religious differences in Iraq should not be divisive. Rather they should be a source of cultural plurality. Otherwise, the new Iraq will be a source of instability and conflict, instead of hope and inspiration for the entire region.

Turkey, in cooperation with the United Nations, has been in the forefront of efforts for political and economic rehabilitation in Iraq. The Neighbours of Iraq forum, again pioneered by Turkey, has been an efficient platform to support the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The security situation is a source of concern for all. Iraq has, unfortunately, become a training ground for terrorists. As a neighbouring country, Turkey suffers as a result of this. We are concerned that terrorism emanating from Iraq might have a ripple effect on other countries, including Turkey. It is our joint duty to prevent such an outcome.

The problems of Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia continue to impede peace and cooperation in the South Caucusus. These problems defy all United Nations principles. They demand our urgent attention. In particular, a peaceful settlement must be found to the Nagorny Karabakh issue consistent with the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Steps towards ending the occupation of Azeri territory will create a better climate in the region, including in Turkish-Armenian relations. We are giving full support to the efforts of the Minsk Group. We are closely following the high-level contacts between Turkey's two neighbours and are encouraging the parties to make progress.

In Afghanistan, many challenges still lie ahead. The continued support of the international community is still needed. Among other matters, education, health, gender equality and economic development need increased attention. Alternative crops must be encouraged in order to replace widespread poppy cultivation. As a country that has twice led the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan,

for a total of 14 months during the past three years, Turkey wishes to reiterate its continued commitment. We welcome the holding of elections as an encouraging development for democracy in Afghanistan.

We are determined to continue our support for the strengthening of peace, stability and prosperity in South-East Europe. The Balkan region has made considerable progress towards the establishment of a peaceful environment leading to economic development. The political and economic consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and final-status talks in Kosovo need to be monitored carefully. Turkey will continue to be a reliable partner in this process.

Regarding the Eastern Mediterranean, our vision is to create a basin of cooperation, stability and prosperity among Turkey, Greece and the two peoples of Cyprus. However, it is regrettable that, at a time when we are debating the best way to reform the United Nations and enhance its role, we are at the same time witnessing an attempt to move the Cyprus problem away from this Organization. We regard these efforts to undermine the role of the United Nations as a most disturbing paradox. The Annan plan represented a unique basis for the solution of this problem. Although it did not fully meet their expectations, for the sake of compromise the Turkish Cypriots approved the plan by an overwhelming majority.

On the other hand, under the effective guidance of the Greek Cypriot leadership, the rejection of the Annan plan in a referendum held last year was a blow to the international community. Thus, a chance to put an end to the division of the island once and for all was missed.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/437) issued after the referendum gave an overview of the long negotiating process and recommended the lifting of all restrictions upon the Turkish Cypriots. Unfortunately, against established practice, the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on Cyprus is being disregarded. As a result, the unfair restrictions imposed upon the Turkish Cypriots could not be lifted. One might find it difficult to believe that the Turkish Cypriots still continue to live under restrictions, cut off from the outside world.

During the ensuing period, the Secretary-General's soundings and his efforts to reactivate the talks based on his plan have yielded no tangible results because of the continued intransigence of the Greek Cypriot administration. As if that were not enough, the Greek Cypriot administration is now trying to sideline the United Nations and carry this issue to other forums. I urge all international actors to discourage these misguided efforts. Turkey continues to be ready to contribute to United Nations endeavours to find a just, equitable and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem on the basis of the Annan plan.

On this occasion, I would like to reiterate the proposal that I made on 30 May 2005 for the lifting of all restrictions related to the island (see A/59/820). In that proposal, I basically suggested that it was necessary to enable the free movement of people, goods and services and to lift all restrictions applied to seaports and airports between the two sides in Cyprus as well as to Turkey and Greece. It is evident that this proposal conforms to the legitimate expectations of the international community.

We attach great importance to furthering our relations and cooperation with the African continent. According to an action plan, Turkey is vigorously developing its relations with Africa as a whole. We recently opened an office in Addis Ababa to serve as a coordination centre for Turkish humanitarian and developmental assistance to the continent. The Turkish Government has also declared 2005 as the Year of Africa in Turkey. We will continue our contributions to international institutions, working to alleviate the suffering and eliminate disease and hunger in Africa.

The chain of attacks in various parts of the world proves that no country is immune to terrorism. We condemn these atrocities in the strongest terms. No distinction should be made among terrorist organizations. There is no room for double standards in this fight. We must reject terrorism as a method, regardless of where, why and how it is employed. Combating terrorism should be a global and collective effort, and the United Nations should continue to play a prominent role. We welcome Security Council resolutions that call for strengthened measures against incitement of terrorist acts and in favour of the prevention of armed conflict, particularly in Africa. We must also resist any temptation to associate any specific culture, religion or faith with terrorism.

We should keep in mind that the right to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy requires full and transparent cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The establishment of zones free of

weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East, will be an important contribution to international peace and security.

Strengthening multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in the international system is a fundamental aspect of our foreign policy. It is the strongest hope and guarantee for a safer and better world.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Mr. Downer (Australia): Australia is a founding Member of the United Nations, and we have long supported this Organization's important role in world affairs. The United Nations has many achievements to celebrate in its sixtieth year. Equally, the sixtieth anniversary places the shortcomings and indeed the failings of the United Nations under a microscope for all to see.

In approaching this occasion, the United Nations and its Members have been presented with a challenge: to find practical and workable ways to bring greater security and prosperity to the people of the world through a reformed United Nations system. This has not been easy. The reform agenda is simultaneously vast and urgent, with agreement on approaches difficult — at times impossible — to achieve, as the recent summit process made clear.

Australia welcomes the summit's progress in some important areas, particularly the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission to assist fragile States, a field of endeavour where Australia has long been active in its own region, as I have outlined in previous addresses to the General Assembly. We also welcome the fact that States have agreed for the first time that the international community, through the United Nations, has the responsibility to act to protect populations from gross and systematic violations of human rights.

We also welcome the call for early conclusion of a comprehensive terrorism convention and early entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

We are pleased that, on development, the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) recognizes what already underpins Australia's approach to development assistance: that good governance, sound economic policies, anti-corruption measures and trade liberalization are critical elements in fighting poverty and promoting economies and stable communities. Australia has a proud record of assistance in these areas, further underscored by our announcement last week of an increase in Australia's overseas aid allocation to about 4 billion Australian dollars by 2010 — a doubling of aid from 2004 levels — as well as generous contributions of 10 million Australian dollars to the Democracy Fund and 3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund over three years.

As a nation that strongly supports an ambitious outcome of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations and recognizes the crucial importance of this to developing countries, Australia also welcomes the pledge and challenge put forward by President Bush a week ago (see A/60/PV.2): that the United States is ready to eliminate all tariffs, subsidies and other barriers if other nations do the same.

But alongside these welcome outcomes, many questions and, in some cases, vast disappointments remain. On arms control and non-proliferation, we have absolutely nothing to show — an extraordinarily poor outcome given a contemporary global security environment in which proliferation threats are so clearly evident.

The outdated ideology that too many delegations brought to negotiations was a damningly deep reflection on the intergovernmental process at the United Nations. We did not grasp the opportunity provided by the largest-ever gathering of world leaders to produce a political declaration defining acts of terrorism.

How can some nations continue to assert that the deliberate maiming and targeting of civilians is sometimes justified?

How is it — after atrocities in Sharm el-Sheikh, Istanbul, Jakarta, Riyadh and on a daily basis in Iraq — that some continue to employ double standards, deceiving themselves into believing that such terrorists could ever be considered to be "freedom fighters"?

This is not an argument about the merits of a particular cause. It is about the moral imperative to outlaw behaviour that offends civilization.

We were disappointed that the summit missed the opportunity to make progress on Security Council reform to ensure that the Council's membership and

functioning match the priorities and the realities of this century.

While the summit resolved to create a Human Rights Council, the outcome document is disappointingly short on detail. A new Human Rights Council must overcome the credibility deficit that plagues current human rights machinery and that sees some of the most egregious human rights abusers elevated to positions of leadership.

Australia will participate constructively in negotiations on the shape of this new Council. We will also more than double — to $650,000 — our contribution to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, the management reforms agreed at the summit are a step in the right direction, but they are just that — one step.

The Secretary-General needs more authority and flexibility to manage the United Nations. And — as recent inquiries have highlighted in sobering detail — the United Nations accountability, audit and oversight systems must be massively strengthened. It will not be easy, but we must address anew our failures.

The summit heralded an historic shift in our thinking on humanitarian intervention, showing a willingness to embrace a new mindset, one which addresses our responsibility to watch out for each other in times of need — our collective "responsibility to protect". Too often the world has stood by watching humanitarian disasters unfold before international machinery has creaked into action.

In Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo, action taken was too little, too late. Today, the situation in Darfur epitomizes those shortcomings.

As the Summit Outcome makes clear, all States have a responsibility to protect their own population from egregious crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity. Where a population is suffering serious harm, and the relevant State is unwilling or unable to stop this, the principle of non-intervention should yield to the collective responsibility to protect.

The Security Council must now rely on this new consensus to respond more effectively to humanitarian crises.

We have a responsibility to react faster to situations of compelling human need, and we must do more to help countries rebuild, recover and reconcile after conflicts or disasters.

In the last year we have seen the people of Afghanistan and Iraq exercise restored democratic rights. The international community must continue support for their transformations, help them to leave behind the experience of brutal dictators and narrow regimes, and ensure that progress and democracy take root.

Ceding any ground in Iraq or Afghanistan to the tyranny of terrorism and the violent suffering it brings would be a backward step in our global campaign, a campaign we continue to fight but have not yet won, as the July terrorist attacks in London and the ongoing terrorist menace in South-East Asia and elsewhere make clear. There remains an urgent need for nations to come together to confront terrorists in the battle of ideas, contest extremist ideologies, and build greater and more productive dialogue between faiths and civilizations.

Australia is doing its utmost in our region to tackle terrorism and the ideology that feeds it. United Nations machinery must also play a part. Many Member States still need assistance to implement United Nations counter-terrorism standards and build their counter-terrorism capabilities — the kind of outcomes Australia is already pursuing in cooperation with its regional partners. Leaders made some progress in this direction last week but did not adopt the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy.

Australia welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in April this year. Our Prime Minister, John Howard, signed that Convention for Australia at the summit. It is now imperative that we redouble our efforts to conclude a comprehensive convention against terrorism during this session of the General Assembly. Closing the gaps in the counter-terrorism legal framework is an essential complement to our concerted efforts to prevent future attacks and to prosecute those who commit terrorist acts. Effective international efforts to criminalize such acts are a vital step forward.

The world today is confronted by a menace not envisaged at the time the Geneva Conventions were drafted — terrorist organizations and their foot soldiers, like those captured in Afghanistan, who bear arms on a battlefield but pay no heed to the laws of

war, fight for no regular army, wear no uniform and bear no recognizable insignia. Just as international law evolved to deal with a scourge of another age — piracy — so today a comprehensive convention against terrorism is needed to help deal with these perpetrators of terrorist acts.

The summit was a lost opportunity on disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral non-proliferation regimes are being tested now by a small minority of Governments that flout the norms and standards observed by the rest of the international community and which in doing so imperil the security of us all.

A dangerous new dimension to this global challenge is the known ambition of terrorists to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It is therefore imperative that we take practical action against proliferation as it occurs, through innovative measures such as the Proliferation Security Initiative that complement and reinforce multilateral regimes.

Earlier this year I saw firsthand the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons be thwarted by a few countries determined to prevent consensus.

Australia — together with the overwhelming majority of States — remains unwavering in its support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we will continue to take a leading role in universalizing the Additional Protocol on strengthening nuclear safeguards, making it a precondition for the supply of uranium to non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is not acceptable, in the current global climate, that we have not started negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, a treaty which would reduce the risk of leakage of fissile material to proliferators or terrorists and would buttress nuclear disarmament gains made to date.

I am pleased to be chairing the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Article XIV Conference this afternoon, looking for ways to accelerate that Treaty's entry into force.

A firmer and more active Security Council role on the issue of weapons of mass destruction is also sorely needed.

Australia is a committed and long-term supporter of the United Nations and of the vital role that it can play in promoting international peace and security. We have a proud record of contributing to United Nations activities, funding and debates, extending back to its formation in 1945.

But we are not an uncritical supporter. The need to reform the United Nations has been a consistent theme since I first addressed the General Assembly at its fifty-first session in 1996. Such a need is all the more compelling today.

The reality is that there continue to be States failing or in precipitous decline for no reasons other than poor leadership and poor governance — with disastrous results for human lives. What does it say when the international community proves to be unwilling to act when misrule has caused life expectancy to plunge in what was one of Africa's most promising countries — from around 63 years in the early 1990s, to just under 34 years in 2004? Would today's United Nations be able to prevent another Rwanda?

We and the publics of the world expect much of the United Nations, and rightly so. The stakes are too high in this complex and challenging security environment to accept anything less. We all have a part to play. There was some welcome progress at the summit, but where we have fallen short we must acknowledge it and be ambitious in pursuing more meaningful reform. Large challenges loom before us. We should approach them with a degree of realism. Australia does not believe that the United Nations is the answer to all the problems of the world. But the Organization does have a role to play. When we call on the United Nations, it must be able to fulfil that role effectively and expeditiously. The publics of the world expect nothing less.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At this session we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. We also begin, actively and seriously, our effort to revitalize this strong Organization, which humankind decided to establish after it experienced two devastating wars during the first half of the twentieth century. There is no doubt that this session has been convened at a time when international relations are undergoing major changes and when hope is being tempered by threats

and challenges to the stability of the international community and the peace and security of all our peoples.

Recent international developments have proved the increasing need to strengthen the capabilities of the multilateral framework in addressing problems facing our nations and peoples and in achieving the required balance on four issues that we consider to be at the core of our contemporary interests: development, international peace and security, human rights and the institutional reform of the Organization.

Addressing the issue of development at the international level requires strong political will to implement the commitments we have undertaken, which we reaffirmed together in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1), primarily the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals adopted at the Millennium Summit, the revitalization of the international partnership for development and the mobilization of the financial resources it requires, and the fulfilment of the commitment made by many developed countries to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in official development assistance by 2015. I would like to take this opportunity to express Egypt's appreciation to the countries that have reaffirmed their commitment to fulfil their obligations in that regard.

In attaining our common goals, it is therefore imperative to use the consensus we reached at the High-level Plenary Meeting as a platform to build greater consensus towards achieving the development priorities of developing countries, especially during the upcoming Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong, and at other international forums dealing with issues of importance to the developing world, especially those of trade, debt relief, investment and industrial modernization, as well as other issues that can bring about the justice and openness required in our international trading system and provide developing countries with the opportunities they need to raise the living standards of their peoples.

In fulfilling our long-standing commitments to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa, Egypt wishes to call upon our partners in developed countries to play a leading role in support of the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). That African-owned initiative constitutes an ambitious partnership for sustainable development that can ensure Africa's integration into the world economy, lead to the achievement of good national and international governance and promote the contribution of civil society and the private sector in the achievement of our development goals.

Along with achieving economic security for all, it is essential that we strive to achieve international peace and security by practically and realistically addressing the challenges and threats facing the international community. Since terrorism is the most dangerous menace of our times, Egypt actively contributed to reaching consensus on the Summit Outcome document's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Contrary to what some might have imagined, the recent terrorist attacks that have struck many countries — including Egypt — have now made it clear that terrorism is a danger that does not distinguish among peoples, cultures or religions; rather it is a non-discriminating threat to human civilization. Those attacks have also reminded us that counter-terrorism efforts should not be limited to enhancing measures to combat terrorism or to finding ways to improve their implementation. Rather, they should include effectively addressing the underlying causes of the phenomenon. Accordingly, Egypt has put forth an initiative to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly to draft and adopt a comprehensive plan of action that includes the necessary legal and practical measures to deal effectively with terrorism — without affecting the ability of peoples under occupation to gain their independence in accordance with established international law and norms — until it is completely eradicated.

In conformity with that position, Egypt pledges to exert extensive efforts with a view to concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Such a convention, along with the 12 existing international counter-terrorism conventions, to which the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was added this year, could constitute the most comprehensive legal framework possible to tackle this phenomenon.

The issues of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction relate to another major threat requiring concerted international action in the near future, specially as the High-level Plenary Meeting could not reach agreement on how to address those issues in a manner consistent with their crucial importance and urgency to the safety and security of the human race. Our common endeavour should be based on restoring the balance between nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy: the three pillars of progress in achieving our common objectives. The point of departure for our undertaking can only be the consensus reached at the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which constitutes an integral part of the package that made possible the indefinite extension of the NPT, along with the resolution on the Middle East adopted at that Conference. Concerted international efforts, in particular by nuclear-weapon States, to achieve the universality of the NPT are essential; otherwise, we risk having the Treaty lose its credibility and relevance.

To that end, we require strong political will to relaunch the United Nations disarmament machinery, reinforce the mutual and balanced implementation of commitments and obligations set forth in existing treaties, achieve the universality of those treaties prior to making any attempts to impose further obligations on States parties and fully respect the commitments entered into under those instruments. We also need determination to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, in order to support efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The establishment of the Human Rights Council must prove to be a landmark in the promotion of, and respect for, principles and freedoms. Its mandate, composition and methods of work must be formulated in a democratic manner and be based on the principle of equitable geographic distribution while also taking into consideration each region's specific cultural and civilizational characteristics. The Human Rights Council must also assist and encourage countries to improve human rights and respect for the rule of law on their territories. To that end, we must strengthen the human rights machinery and the rule of law in a manner that will enable us to redress existing shortcomings — in particular, politicization, selectivity and double standards — and as to promote coexistence and dialogue among civilizations in contrast to the division and differences that characterize our current handling of these issues. In that connection, I agree with the previous speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

The Egyptian National Council on Human Rights has been established in order to promote that effort. It enjoys the institutional independence it needs to carry out its tasks with due impartiality and objectivity. It also has the capacity to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to participate in the formulation, prioritization and implementation of national policies.

We must also launch a coordinated multilateral effort to promote human rights and to address rights violations by enhancing the capacity of States to protect their populations against genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Here, we must not capitalize on exceptional situations as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of States. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant provisions of international law, we must draw a line between the inability of a State to protect its population against such crimes and its unwillingness to do so.

Our common efforts to ensure larger freedom for our peoples are closely linked to our resolve and ability to settle current political issues, most notably in our region, the Palestinian question. While we welcome the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a few settlements in the northern part of the West Bank, we also call upon the Israeli Government to continue withdrawing its troops from all Palestinian territories and to implement all of its commitments in that respect, in accordance with the road map, which should lead us to our common goal: the establishment of an independent Palestinian State coexisting with Israel in mutual peace and security. However, until we reach that goal, Israel must cease settlement activities in the West Bank, stop building its separation wall, improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and launch final-status negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement. Israel must also withdraw from the remaining Arab territories in Syria and Lebanon occupied in 1967.

Furthermore, we cannot address respect for human rights unless we address the human rights situation in Iraq, particularly every Iraqi citizen's right

to life. In that context, and despite the establishment of the Interim Government and the drafting of a new constitution, national reconciliation among the entire brotherly Iraqi people is still needed. We urgently need an increased understanding that violence and the killing of innocent people will not lead to the desired security and stability for Iraq.

Egypt will continue its support for the important steps taken by the Sudan towards peace and stability, in the context of maintaining that country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Egypt will continue to support the implementation of the Nairobi Comprehensive Peace Agreement on southern Sudan and the Cairo agreement complementing it. We will also participate actively in peace negotiations on Darfur under the auspices of the African Union and continue Egypt's support by contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, as well as observers to the African Union Mission in Darfur.

It is in that context that Egypt continues to place the security and stability of Africa at the centre of its regional and international policies. Egypt will therefore continue to increase its efforts to resolve contemporary African political problems. It has contributed, and will continue to contribute, to all peacekeeping operations in Africa, as well as to support all of Africa's ongoing efforts to implement an integrated approach to development that covers all political, economic and social dimensions. Egypt's commitment to Africa is based on an unwavering conviction of our common destiny and on the need for continued cooperation. Here, the African Union has a central role to play; it must have the full support of the United Nations.

Because of the particular importance that Africa attaches to the link between security and development in addressing situations in countries emerging from conflict, Egypt has supported the establishment of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. However, the activities of the Commission must reflect a balance among the various mandates of the principal organs of the United Nations and the various steps taken in tackling each issue. We also call for a leading in the work of the Commission role for both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, along with the Security Council. The Commission must become neither a body to impose trusteeship on States nor an instrument to bypass the will and the national priorities of States. The Peacebuilding Commission must always remain an effective advisory body focusing on mobilizing assistance to post-conflict countries on its agenda, in order to enable them to attain their national aspirations to sustainable peace and stability.

The United Nations will not be able to carry out all those increasing and challenging tasks unless we embark upon effective institutional reform that takes into consideration the balance between the Organization's principal organs, that ensures the implementation of the Organization's tasks and that enhances the credibility of the United Nations and eliminates the causes of the criticism it has been facing.

There is no doubt that among the most important pillars of institutional reform is the revitalization of the General Assembly and the strengthening of its role as the chief deliberative, policymaking, implementing and monitoring body of the United Nations. The Assembly should cooperate with the Secretary-General within a transparent framework and should provide him with the authority he needs to carry out his tasks effectively while ensuring that he remains committed to the tasks mandated by the principal organs of the Organization.

We look forward to the proposals that the Secretary-General is expected to present, including those on improving auditing and oversight, which should duly take into account the intergovernmental nature of the existing budgetary and management committees. We also look forward to undertaking, through the General Assembly and other relevant bodies, a one-time review of mandates older than five years, while emphasizing the need to avoid a mere regulatory approach to that issue and the imperative of taking its political implications into consideration. We must never neglect the international political balance, or affect ongoing efforts to resolve contemporary problems.

In that context, the reform and expansion of the Security Council is becoming increasingly important, particularly in the light of the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security. That reform must ensure that the Security Council is more representative of the general membership of the Organization and more transparent in addressing the issues on its agenda. In that regard, I wish to stress the commitment of Egypt to the African Common Position on this issue, as set out in the Ezulwini consensus and the Sirte declaration, which aims at fulfilling the

legitimate aspirations of our continent for permanent and balanced representation in an expanded Security Council and at remedying the existing imbalance in the representation of Africa in particular and of developing countries in general.

The outcome document that we adopted at the High-level Plenary Meeting marking the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 60/1) is solid proof of the vitality of the Organization and of a genuine desire that its essential role continue. We look forward to working together to move ahead and to improve the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil our common objectives on the basis of firm political will to implement the commitments agreed upon in that document. We must expand the agreement's scope to encompass all aspects of international action. That is the only path available to us in order to attain our peoples' aspirations to peace, security and stability.

The President: I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Samuel R. Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guyana and the former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Following closely, as it does, on the heels of last week's High-level Plenary Meeting, the remainder of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is challenged to take steps towards the early implementation of the agreed outcome. In the eyes of many, the summit document (resolution 60/1) is less than satisfactory in terms of both its scope and its substance. Nonetheless, it represents a common platform on which we can build further to reach higher levels of international cooperation.

To you, Mr. President, my dear friend, falls the task of spearheading that enterprise. Your outstanding diplomatic experience assures us all that you will succeed in the mandate given to you. If I am to give you any advice on how you should now proceed, I would simply echo — and then perhaps very slightly paraphrase — the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, your compatriot and former Secretary-General, when he said, "Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top". To this I would add, then you will see that the climb was not all that bad.

We owe a debt of gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, the outgoing President, for his effective stewardship of the work of the Assembly during the fifty-ninth session. To the Secretary-General I wish to express our appreciation for his effort to equip our Organization for the challenges that confront today.

I would also like to offer our appreciation a thanks to our host country, the United States, and renew to it our assurances of sympathy with regard the severe losses suffered in the wake of Hurrica Katrina.

As was stated earlier by President Jagdeo Guyana (see A/60/PV.8), international developme goals — and especially the Millennium Developme Goals, which were set at the Summit five years ago a which we have just reviewed — remain an import benchmark for global development. Aimed at securi the important prerequisites for our economic and soc advancement in such areas as health, education a other basic services, they must be fully embraced a pursued by the international community.

My own country has been diligent in worki towards those objectives. Through a visionary povert reduction strategy and the allocation of more resourc to the social sector, we have been able to improve t lot of the disadvantaged among our population a enlarge their opportunities for a better li Unfortunately, however, further progress is now bei jeopardized by a number of untoward developmen Among these has been the recent revision of Europe agriculture policy, and more particularly the Europe Commission's proposal to drastically reduce the pri for the sugar exports of African, Caribbean and Pacif States. That proposal, if implemented, will serious affect our own sugar industry and will plunge many our people who depend on it into extreme poverty.

Our economy stands to lose some $40 million p year, a sum that nullifies the $8 million which we w have received as a result of the recent Group of Eig decisions on debt relief. The result is an example of th skewed and often incoherent policies pursued by son developed countries. Without consultation or warnin they adopt measures that wreak enormous havoc on th economies of developing countries, particularly th small and the vulnerable.

The only hope on the horizon for us lies in th promise held out by several recent initiatives, such a the Millennium Challenge Account of the Unite States, the International Finance Facility of the Unite Kingdom, the Action Against Hunger and Povert Initiative, led by Brazil and other States, and, mo latterly, the levy on air travel suggested by France an

others for the financing of development. As the review of the Millennium Development Goals has revealed, an additional $50 billion will be needed annually to reach the targets set. New and additional resources are therefore clearly required if we are to make any impact on global poverty.

While we in the developing world would prefer to rely on trade instead of aid for our development, the prospects for improving our position are bleak. The road from Cancún to Dalian to Hong Kong has been tedious, strewn with obstacles and, now, highly uncertain. As in New York, developed countries seem content with making broad declarations rather than specific commitments. The calls by small economies for special and differential treatment have thus far been only grudgingly acknowledged. Yet, without full regard for paragraph 35 of the Doha Declaration, countries like mine are likely to be further marginalized by the global economy.

Economic and social progress will come to the developing world only when its countries are allowed to have a say in the decision-making on development issues. The chapter in the *2005 Human Development Report* on our interdependent world quotes an African proverb that states that "Until the lions have their historians ... tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter" (*p. 113*). It is therefore time for the developing world, which has long been considered only an object in the development process, to be given a more active and participatory role in the process. Only then will we be able properly to address the outcome of our policies.

Many of the prescriptions for poverty eradication have been based on the time-worn theory of development that posits that the increasing economic prosperity of the developed world will eventually raise the standard of living for all States — that is to say, that a rising tide lifts all boats. But any serious analysis of that development paradigm as it has functioned over the past several decades will amply demonstrate that that is a very flawed concept. The gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen, a reality to which the *2005 Human Development Report* amply testifies.

There therefore has to be a serious global rethinking of what constitutes real and sustainable development. We cannot avoid the conclusion that while the realization of the Millennium Development Goals will provide the necessary foundation for development, true economic and social progress cannot be achieved in the absence of a more comprehensive policy framework that encompasses significant assistance and investment flows, wider debt relief, more equitable trade and economic cooperation and the transfer of science and technology for development purposes. That realization has led my Government to advocate at the United Nations the promotion of a new global human order: a more comprehensive and holistic strategy based on equity and social justice.

With regard to the second major area of concern addressed in the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) — namely, the issues of democracy, human rights and security — let me say that Guyana, as a newly restored democracy, fully supports the promotion of all fundamental human freedoms and values. After all, they constitute the bedrock of the United Nations Charter and the basic rights of our peoples. We therefore welcome the initiative to establish a Democracy Fund to propagate the democratic ideal, as well as the setting up of a Human Rights Council to replace the current Commission on Human Rights.

Raising the status of the Commission on Human Rights can do much to enhance respect for human rights. We are concerned, however, about the representative character of the proposed Council and would be seriously distressed if it were to emerge as an elite directorate sitting in judgement of other States deemed to be less than equal. The holier-than-thou attitude of some countries on matters relating to democracy and human rights is not acceptable in an Organization founded on the principles of the equality of States, mutual understanding and respect. No one is perfect, and we all fall short of the glory of God. It would therefore be imperative for the General Assembly, in its further consideration of that proposal, to carefully examine such issues as the criteria for membership, size and voting procedures, in order to ensure that the principles of the Charter are not vitiated.

Finally, there is the third leg of the report's thematic tripod, namely, security. As is now universally recognized, security is a sine qua non for the protection of democracy and human rights, as well as for the promotion of development. It is therefore essential, in view of the vast array of threats to international peace and security, that we mount the necessary defences against the spread of terrorism,

transboundary crime, arms and drug trafficking, disease and the increasing incidence of natural disasters, which must now be an integral process of our development analysis. Unfortunately, however, the cost of such measures takes a very heavy toll on our limited human and financial resources — resources that can be better spent in the area of development.

To illustrate the challenge we face, let me cite the case of my own country, which, after suffering a disastrous flood earlier this year that led to a loss of almost 60 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) — according to an assessment by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean — now faces spiralling oil prices, amounting, in terms of expenditure, to 24 per cent of GDP and heavy revenue loss to our sugar-export earnings. How can one speak meaningfully in such circumstances of achieving the Millennium Development Goals? Small countries like ours have to find solutions to these pressing problems, or else run the risk of being thrust further back into underdevelopment.

For several decades now, we have been seeking to reform the United Nations system to make it more responsive to the challenges of our times. To some extent we have succeeded in our effort but, clearly, much more remains to be done. We therefore urge the President to hold to his promise and to pursue the revitalization of the General Assembly, the most democratic and representative of the United Nations organs, to enable it to promote the high principles and purposes of the Charter. The potential of the Assembly's role in fighting the scourge of war and promoting development is yet to be fully explored and exploited. At the same time, it is necessary to bring development issues, which are now largely the purview of multilateral financial institutions, more fully within the ambit of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Council, where developing countries can have a greater voice on matters pertaining to their welfare.

Of some urgency is the reform of the Security Council, the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is time that the Council be made more equitable in its composition, more democratic in its decision-making and more effective in its operation. The deliberations of the relevant working group have generated wide-spread agreement on the need for expansion of the Council's membership. The various permutations have been explored, and all options are on the table. We are now offered a historic opportunity to reform the Council — an opportunity that, if not taken now, may not soon come our way again. My delegation therefore urges the Assembly to expedite and conclude its work in this area.

The latest proposal for an advisory Peacebuilding Commission is a welcome one, since there is a clear relationship between conflict and development. Much too often, the gains made in the area of conflict resolution are rapidly negated by the lack of accompanying measures to preserve stability and encourage development. Such a commission, if properly conceived and constituted, can usefully complement and optimize the work of the principal organs of the United Nations.

In the end, however, if we are to achieve a stronger, more democratic and effective United Nations, we will have to go beyond the reform of its organs and agencies to a reform of the attitudes and behaviour of States, which, while giving lip service to such concepts as partnership, cohesion and interdependence, fail to practice those virtues in their relations with other States. There is always a vast divide between declarations and deeds. Yet, the implementation of the common agenda that we have set ourselves at the sixtieth session is not possible without a greater commitment to change.

As the *2005 Human Development Report* states, it cannot be business as usual for the United Nations. The Millennium Declaration must be more than a paper promise. We need to

> "mobilize the investment resources and develop the plans needed to build the defences that can stop the tsunami of world poverty". (*2005 Human Development Report*, *p. 2*)

That is the challenge issued to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, and the yardstick by which its success will be judged. For the sake of the billions who continue to live in fear and want, we must seek to achieve that larger freedom that is the birthright of all humankind.

The President: May I say that I particularly appreciate the advice given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, former General Assembly President Insanally, who mentioned a quotation by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. As the Assembly may be

aware, Mr. Hammarskjöld was born 100 years ago this year. The quote he mentioned was:

> "Never measure the height of the mountain until you have reached the top; then you will see how low it was".

I referred to a similar quotation from his memoirs in my statement on 13 June, which I hope the Assembly will not mind my repeating, because it is related to the quotation read by former Assembly President Insanally. The quotation is:

> "Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step; only he who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road".

I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Pierre Stewart Pettigrew, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Pettigrew (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations is cause for inspiration, concern and action. It is a source of inspiration because 60 years of collective action for peace and development is an anniversary to celebrate. And what better time to do so than on the International Day of Peace? It is a cause for concern because the challenges, far from diminishing, have continued to grow, and we have not reached a consensus on a whole range of essential reforms. Some important components are missing. It is a call for action because all of us here have recognized that the United Nations remains an indispensable instrument and because change is still needed. We have no choice: we must move forward.

But we have come a long way. Two years ago, the United Nations was in a sorry state indeed; the situation in Iraq not only had divided the membership but had left deep scars within our institution. That is why I pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having established the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, whose report (A/59/565) has truly revolutionized how all of us think about the Organization's future.

Jeffrey Sachs and his colleagues also delivered to us a remarkable document on "Investing in Development" — development that Canada has done so much to promote ever since the era of Lester Pearson. In "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General summarized that work with clarity and discernment and set out an ambitious plan for us. We have not adopted all of his recommendations — far from it. We could have, and should have, done better. The summit is by no means the end of the debate. To the contrary, we have a mandate to continue our efforts and to make this sixtieth-anniversary year a year of reform.

We are all aware of the risks of unilateralism or piecemeal multilateralism. But we are not sufficiently aware that humanity's future lies in accepting the inextricable links among security, development and human rights.

To predict the future is to understand the past, so it behoves us all to look back over the 60 years of our Organization. The contribution of the United Nations to the progress of humanity is indisputable. The Organization's successes, more than its failures, show us the path to take so that we can meet current and future challenges.

Let us not forget that in 1945 the whole world was rising from ruins and States were determined that that would never happen again. So it is not surprising that the first objective expressed in the Charter of the United Nations centred on security so as to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

We have known the horrors of war over the past 60 years, but we have avoided descending into the hell of a third world war. How did we do that? At the United Nations, the super-Powers had no choice. Under the aegis of the Organization, they concluded major disarmament and arms control agreements. In sum, the role played by the United Nations in ending the stand off between East and West is one of the greatest successes of the past century.

(*spoke in English*)

Sixty years ago, the nations meeting in San Francisco set the second objective: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. The founders of the United Nations foresaw that if we were to avoid the conflicts of the past, the world of tomorrow needed to be more human. With that in mind, Canada's John Humphrey worked hard to help draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We have become ever more demanding about the protection of human rights — including women's rights — as well we should be. We are duty-bound to prevent or combat flagrant violations, which still plague the world. The Commission on Human Rights has played a key role in that respect, but its serious shortcomings unfortunately eclipse its valuable contributions, necessitating its replacement.

Mr. Mwakwere (Kenya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

History shows that democracy and human rights go hand in hand. The United Nations has entrenched human rights through a series of legal instruments that Governments concluded under the Organization's aegis and has extended a range of protections, such as conventions on eliminating discrimination against women, on children's rights and against torture.

The United Nations remains a key forum for debating human rights failures around the world. And it is in that area that the Organization has played a leading role in changing global culture, fostering the acceptance of new standards and setting criteria for judging Governments' actions. That is another remarkable success for the United Nations.

The third objective of the Charter called on Members to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. For 60 years, the United Nations has been at the heart of a vast network of bilateral and regional treaties covering nearly the gamut of international relations. In so doing, the Organization has helped to bring about an infinitely more integrated world where interactions among peoples take place in a predictable fashion and within a defined regulatory framework. This global legal framework is the foundation of peace. Where the framework has not yet taken shape, conflicts multiply. The world needs the United Nations to perfect this tremendous asset.

The fourth objective of the Charter touched at the heart of our debate today on the Millennium Development Goals, calling on members to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. That message was prophetic at the time. The founders of the United Nations already foresaw that beyond the massive destruction of 1939 to 1945, a fundamental poverty afflicted almost every country and region in the world — a poverty that had to be fought unwaveringly.

Today, we salute their hope and their desire to create a better, safer and more prosperous world. Among the surest ways in which to create that type of world are the growing participation of women in economic, civil and political life and the emergence of a middle class, both of which justify hope for real progress on the road to growth. Those promising trends need to be accelerated.

The United Nations has played a fundamental role on that front. Its specialized agencies and affiliates have helped set development objectives and have delivered the bulk of international aid. Thanks to those efforts, the world is a better place to live in today. And today, five years after the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, the United Nations is where the world's nations recall their common commitment to development, with a keener understanding, since the Monterrey summit, of the obligations that we all must bear.

With respect to the four major objectives of the Charter, comparing ideals against reality inevitably brings disappointment. For each major step forward, there have been many failures, in particular the absence of a collective will to adapt our institution to current needs.

Where are we now, and what do we need to do to better respond to our hopes? The starting point is clearly the document (resolution 60/1) approved by heads of State or Government last week. That document is a foundation on which, with a great deal of political will on the part of all Members, we can think of renewing the United Nations. In any case, we have a working framework for the years to come.

I am especially pleased that the document includes strong references to development and to the values and principles that inspire us. The declaration also provides clear, important directions on United Nations management, transparency and accountability. But we need to go much further in that direction.

I would now like to address some of the points raised in the declaration. First is the "responsibility to protect". In recognizing that responsibility, this body has taken a step that goes beyond utterances of "Never again" — a step that brings us closer to making

genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity things of the past. We now need to implement it.

Secondly, with respect to the Human Rights Council, Canada is disappointed that members did not show greater courage. We have not established the Council; we have only the mandate to work on that issue this year. We need such a Council because it will help us take an in-depth look at situations of concern to us, such as that in Iran. Canada's position is clear: the Council must be a permanent body, with members elected by a two-thirds majority, on the basis of specific criteria, and it must provide for a system of peer review, starting with the countries that will sit on the Council. I am pleased, however, that the High Commissioner for Human Rights will have a bigger budget.

(*spoke in French*)

Thirdly, let me turn to the Peacebuilding Commission. Here again, our work is unfinished. A reference to a sequential relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could have been a solution to the question of relations between the Commission and existing bodies.

The fourth point is global health. The United Nations must make every effort to protect threatened populations. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria still plague the world, to our collective shame. We have a shared responsibility to eliminate those diseases; we can and must do better. We need to prepare for pandemics, including avian flu, on which Canada recently hosted an international meeting of health ministers.

Fifthly, with respect to terrorism, the attacks that took place this past summer in London, in Egypt and elsewhere make it more necessary than ever that there be a global convention in the war on terror.

But we must also bear in mind that the overall global security architecture must be strengthened, from light weapons to weapons of mass destruction, including the whole range of disarmament and arms control measures. We can certainly be heartened by the progress that is being made in the Middle East, Haiti, the Sudan and Afghanistan, high-priority regions for Canada and where United Nations action is often exemplary. But that success remains fragile, and the commitment of the United Nations must continue.

Sixthly, concerning the environment, if we want to leave future generations a planet that is a healthy place to live, we need jointly to manage its environment. In less than two months, Montreal will play host to a climate-change conference that should represent a milestone in terms of our common thinking and action in the face of that phenomenon. We will be discussing the progress made in implementing the Kyoto Protocol and new possibilities for action in the decades to come.

Let me conclude with a few thoughts on what the final document does not say, or at least does not say well.

First, on disarmament, it is deplorable that a United Nations outcome document could contain not one paragraph on disarmament and non-proliferation at a time when we are debating Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programmes.

Secondly, on women's rights, it is deeply regrettable that the document could not even reiterate as forcefully the commitments made 10 years ago in Beijing or Cairo on women's rights and gender equality, despite the fact that they lie at the very heart of the Millennium Development Goals. All Member States need to implement their provisions and move from promises to action.

Thirdly, on the International Criminal Court, Canada regrets the absence of any reference in the document to the International Criminal Court as well as its silence on commitments to end impunity. It is imperative that the United Nations address the issue of impunity. Two years ago, when the Rome Statute came into force, the Secretary- General clearly stated that "the time is at last coming when humanity no longer has to bear impotent witness to the worst atrocities, because those tempted to commit such crimes will know that justice awaits them".

We urge all States to sign and ratify the Rome Statute. Together, we will break the cycle of impunity, and justice will be done for the victims of such crimes.

We are meeting in New York today to help solve humanity's problems. But while this Hall has witnessed too many unresolved debates and far too much costly inaction, the challenges and problems we discuss lie far afield. Over the years we have confronted grave challenges in the Sudan, Haiti, Kosovo and Rwanda, and in many other places. In some cases, we can hold

our heads high; in others, we need to recognize, and learn from, our mistakes and failures. I think we have charted the course, but we still have far to travel.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Maldives.

Mr. Shaheed (Maldives): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to preside over this session of the General Assembly. I should like also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor for the exemplary manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly.

Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his inspiring report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all".

It was 40 years ago today that the Maldives was admitted to the membership of the United Nations. We are very proud of that milestone. We were then the smallest country to have joined the United Nations, a fact which led to questions being asked in some quarters as to the viability of full membership for small States and their ability to assume it. We survived the so-called mini-State debate, thereby reinforcing the concept of the sovereign equality of all States, regardless of size. We also survived the cold war without losing the peace and stability that have been so essential to the social and economic progress of our people.

But today we are facing a much more challenging task and much more serious questions about the economic viability of the country, whose economy has been devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Compared to other affected countries, the loss of life and property damage in the Maldives were small in absolute numbers. But in proportionate terms, we are the worst-affected country.

Some 62 per cent of the gross domestic product has been destroyed. More than 7 per cent of the population is internally displaced. The social and economic infrastructure was damaged or destroyed in over one quarter of all inhabited islands, 12 of which are now nothing but rubble.

Given the nationwide scale of destruction, timely assistance from the international community was crucial in dealing with the emergency relief requirements. We thank all nations, peoples and organizations for their generosity.

I would also like to extend a special vote of appreciation and thanks to President Bill Clinton, the United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, for his commitment and leadership in coordinating international efforts to assist affected countries with the recovery. We are particularly grateful for his continued engagement, given that nearly nine months after the tsunami, the situation in the country has not eased.

There are still major funding gaps in the national economic recovery programme. An economy which had grown at an average of 8 per cent per annum during the past two decades is now forecast to contract by 3 per cent. Rising oil prices, unforeseen tsunami-related expenditures and tourism revenue shortfall are creating significant financial pressures requiring, for the first time in our history, budget support from donors.

As a small country, the Maldives lays great store on assistance from the international community for its survival. We hope that our appeals for assistance will result in the extension of the support that is required to tide us over the current blip in the economy.

It is ironic that just six days before the tsunami struck, the Assembly had voted to begin a transition period for the Maldives for graduation from least developed country status. While we recognize the achievements of our people through their diligent efforts and the support of the donor community, it is vital that trade preferences and other concessions not be phased out through graduation before the country recovers from the extensive destruction caused by the tsunami.

The tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean was a grim reminder of the ferocity of the elements and the helplessness of communities exposed to natural disasters. Just as we support the establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean, our thoughts are also with the millions of people in the United States, India, China, Japan and elsewhere who recently have faced extreme weather events which brought unprecedented death, destruction and pain. Our hearts go out to those in New Orleans affected by Hurricane Katrina.

One cannot overstate the importance of protecting the environment and saving lives. There is no longer a frontline comprising only small low-lying island States. Indeed, climate change can cause destruction anytime and anywhere. Prevention is the only option when there is no cure. We hope that the Kyoto Protocol will be implemented with full effectiveness.

Small States have the narrowest margins of safety and the least ability to mitigate or overcome environmental catastrophes. We would like to assert the critical importance of the early and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States.

Not only is the Maldives seeking to build back better after the tsunami but we are also going through a historic transformation of the governance structures of the country. The Agenda for Democracy and Reform being pursued by the Government focuses not only on making the Maldives a twenty-first century democracy, but also on strengthening human rights protection.

With the acceleration of the Government's reform programme over the past two years, sweeping changes have been brought to the political landscape of the Maldives. Political pluralism has been strengthened by introducing, for the first time in the country's history, a multiparty system. The country is also undertaking unprecedented legal and judicial reforms aimed at a comprehensive modernization of the criminal justice system in order to bring it into compliance with international norms and standards.

A Constitutional Assembly is in session to draw up a modern democratic constitution to embed liberal democracy in the country and strengthen adherence to international standards in civil liberties and the protection of human rights.

Just last week, the Maldives signed on to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We are already committed to full transparency and openness in safeguarding human rights in the Maldives. We believe that the engagement of the international community is one of the strongest safeguards in protecting human rights. We have already acceded to a number of conventions on human rights and we are confident that the measures currently under way in the national reform programme will enable us to fully comply with and become parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

To recall Sir Winston Churchill, it would not be enough to say that we will do all that we can. Rather, we would like to say that we will do all that is required, and then some, to ensure that our people live in larger freedom, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter.

We are mindful that under Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter Member States are not required to submit matters within their domestic jurisdiction for settlement in United Nations forums, but the Maldives believes that its aspirations to build a modern and mature democracy are important enough to be articulated before this Assembly. Moreover, given our limited resources and dearth of technical expertise, the support of the international community is vital for the success of the ambitious democracy project being pursued by the Government. We are indeed encouraged by the initiative to establish a Democracy Fund. I gratefully acknowledge the support being extended to us by the United Nations system and our bilateral partners in this historic enterprise in the Maldives.

Today, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the admission of the Maldives to the United Nations, my President wrote to the Secretary-General thanking him and the United Nations membership for their collaboration and support over the past four decades on matters of crucial national interest to the Maldives: we recall the support given by this Assembly to the requirements of protection and security of small States; we acknowledge the important role played by the United Nations membership in advancing efforts to protect the global environment; and we are gratified by the assistance that we are getting towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Already we are on track for attaining most of the MDGs.

We hope that the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) will expedite the march of countries towards attainment of the MDGs and towards conquering disease, despair and deprivation.

The July bombings in London and other incidents of terrorism have shocked and horrified us. We hope that measures agreed upon to combat international terrorism, strengthen peace and international security, promote peacebuilding and strengthen the United

Nations machinery on human rights protection will be followed up effectively.

Sound multilateralism is crucial to our quest for a better world in an age of globalization. It is therefore important that the effectiveness of the United Nations be strengthened.

We welcome the proposals made by the Secretary-General on all aspects of United Nations reform. While we recognize the need for comprehensive reforms, we hope that the reforms of the Security Council will be completed before the year's end in order to enable it to reflect more fully the realities of the twenty-first century. Our support of the Group of Four proposal is based on those considerations and we hope that there will be wide support for it.

We have consistently expressed concern about conflict and tension in the Middle East. We are encouraged by the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. We hope that this will be a first step in the movement towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the firm commitment of the Maldives to the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We will work with the other members of the international community to uphold and promote those lofty objectives.

We seek a world, as envisioned 60 years ago in the United Nations Charter, of all peoples living in larger freedom, free from want, free from fear and with the dignity that God almighty bestowed on all of us.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Tsend Munkh-Orgil, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

Mr. Munkh-Orgil (Mongolia): Let me begin by congratulating the President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, for his tireless efforts in the lead-up to the summit meeting and for his contribution to the elaboration and adoption of the outcome document (resolution 60/1). Mongolia considers the outcome document, with all its omissions, to be another important milestone in forging global consensus on development, and pledges to contribute its modest share to the successful implementation of the commitments contained therein. In this connection, I would also like to commend our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his leadership and vision and to wish him well in his bold reform activities. I also warmly congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson on his well-deserved election to the presidency and express our confidence that his skill, experience and intimate knowledge of the matters at hand will enable us to successfully follow through on the commitments made by our leaders last week in this Assembly.

Mongolia is poised to achieve most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education, gender, child and maternal health and combating various diseases by 2015. Capitalizing on its 1990 system of public health and education and a traditional culture of gender equality, Mongolia is well on track to achieve, by 2015, universal primary education and literacy, eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education, and reduce its child mortality rate by two-thirds and maternal mortality rate by three fourths. However, the most important goal of halving poverty by 2015 looks highly elusive, if not unachievable, at the moment. Aware of its responsibility for its own development, Mongolia has, by and large, managed its public finances responsibly and maintained macroeconomic stability. It has done its utmost to adopt and implement sound national policies and development strategies and to introduce good governance and the rule of law.

Yet, like many other small, vulnerable and commodity-dependent economies, Mongolia's development is severely handicapped by many factors well beyond its control. Skyrocketing oil prices, for instance, are taking a serious toll on economic growth, engulfing whatever gains we made earlier on, and are exposing already vulnerable societies to increased hardship and uncertainty. Many frustrated oil-importing developing countries have articulated a number of interesting ideas during this general debate, and we urge the international financial institutions and the oil producers to heed our collective appeal.

Last week world leaders once again reaffirmed their commitment to address the special needs of the landlocked countries and their special difficulties in integrating into multilateral trading systems. Full, timely and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the Sao Paulo Consensus, adopted at the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development will provide a significant boost to the development and poverty

reduction efforts of the landlocked countries, including Mongolia. Mongolia spends a significant portion of its gross domestic product (GDP) on transit transportation and insurance costs through its two neighbours, Russia and China, roughly double the transportation costs of other developing countries. Since 1998, Mongolia has been negotiating with these two neighbours on a framework agreement on transit transport to reduce transit transportation costs and related cumbersome procedures, both in crossing the land border and in trans-shipment at ports. Six rounds of talks ended for the most part inconclusively, but we hope that with the renewed commitment of our leaders to the Almaty Declaration, agreement will be within our collective reach.

Mongolia is a small economy, highly vulnerable to commodity market fluctuations and weather and climatic conditions. The call made in the Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1) on the need to support the efforts of commodity-dependent countries to restructure, diversify and strengthen the competitiveness of their commodity sectors merits a swift response from the international community. In this regard, I wish to draw the attention of this Assembly to the important recommendations derived from the Multi-Stakeholder Consultations organized by the New Rules for the Global Finance Coalition in preparation for the summit. Recommendations include commodity price arrangements and stabilization tools and the establishment of a rapid-responding, overarching, grant-financed shocks facility for low-income commodity-dependent countries. Immediate establishment of such a facility would make a tangible contribution to our efforts to reduce poverty.

Mongolia is highly susceptible to natural disasters, which cause loss of life and extensive damage to its economy. In addition, desertification, deforestation and soil erosion hamper our development efforts. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts to address these trans-boundary threats collectively. For our part, we will continue to take specific measures in combating desertification, in using land resources properly and in protecting forests by introducing and implementing special protective strategies.

Despite an encouraging increase in official development assistance (ODA) in recent years, after a decade of steady decline, the world is still well short of achieving the long-standing target of 0.7 per cent of GDP. We are encouraged that the war against poverty will now be waged more aggressively with the commitment of the world leaders to increase ODA to developing countries by $50 billion a year by the year 2010. However, it is imperative to increase the aid quantity to a sufficient level to make multiple investments in the health, education and economic infrastructure needed to break cycles of deprivation and ensure sustained growth. Furthermore, the quality of aid has to be improved, as per the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005, with a particular emphasis on providing stable and predictable multi-year financing, and with a focus on development goals, mutual accountability, building institutional capacity, untying aid, reducing transaction costs and bureaucratic procedures and increasing the recipient's ownership of aid.

Mongolia fully endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that, starting in 2005, developing countries with sound, transparent and accountable national strategies should receive a sufficient increase in aid, of sufficient quality and timeliness to enable them to achieve their Millennium Development Goals. In addition, new and innovative sources of financing, including an International Finance Facility, quick-impact initiatives and debt-conversion for MDG implementation projects should urgently be put in place.

Mongolia, for one, resolves to introduce free school lunches, starting with those for primary schoolchildren, as a quick-impact initiative.

Despite the importance of aid for developing countries, trade and investment play a pivotal role in ensuring sustainable development. According to the *2005 Human Development Report*, trade barriers faced by developing countries exporting to developed countries are three to four times higher than those faced by developed countries when they trade with each other. The current multilateral trade negotiations have not produced a tangible outcome that would meet our expectations from the Doha development agenda. The Doha Round, to be successful, should result in establishing fairer and more favourable terms of trade for developing countries, especially those with special needs, in the form of enhanced and predictable market access and assistance in building productive and trade capacities. Mongolia appreciates the decision of the European Union to provide duty-free access to over 7,200 goods from small and vulnerable economies,

including Mongolia, under the special Generalized System of Preferences Plus scheme. Increased and better access means that more families will be able to leave destitution and poverty behind.

The Summit Outcome emphasized once again the importance of a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries. In assessing the eligibility of countries for debt relief, we urge the donor community not to limit itself to mere statistics or rigid categorizations such as "least developed countries". Debt relief should be considered comprehensively, taking into account the history and impact of the debt on the development of the recipient country and its actual capacity to repay. Many of these factors were taken into account when Mongolia negotiated its debt repayment with Russia. I would like to take this opportunity to express from this podium the gratitude of my Government to the Government of the Russian Federation for its display of solidarity and political and economic pragmatism in resolving this issue, so important for us.

We believe that education is an engine for development, a guarantee of the respect for human rights and a pillar of democracy. Mongolia has made substantial efforts in the second half of the last century to develop its education system. As a result, the adult literacy rate has reached 97.8 per cent. Nonetheless, taking stock of our recent past, we have drawn lessons so as to further improve the deliverables of the education system. Stronger emphasis is now placed on vocational and technical training, the quality of education, addressing functional illiteracy against the backdrop of the rapid advance of information and communications technology and the universal usage of English. These policy measures are taken in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action and the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Mongolia welcomes the strong focus on human rights, rule of law and democracy in the Summit Outcome. Democracy and rule of law are not part of a state of affairs that can be arranged or introduced overnight. We believe that fostering democracy and rule of law is a continuous process, and we hope that this long-term, sustained approach will prevail in the activities of United Nations institutions. We support the efforts of the United Nations to make democracy a universal environment for global governance. We believe that the United Nations Democracy Fund is an important product in the overall reform process, as it highlights the importance of democracy and the role of the Organization. Mongolia believes that the Fund should serve as a vital instrument to assist Member States in the consolidation of democracy and implementation of their commitments, including the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2003 and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/13.

We all agree that the United Nations must be strengthened to meet the challenges of the new millennium. This will be an all-encompassing task that would involve system-wide reform of the Organization to bring it in line with the realities of our era, including, where necessary, changes in composition, mandates, procedures and working methods of the principal and subsidiary organs, the various programmes and funds, as well as the establishment of new or reinvigoration of existing bodies. Overall, United Nations assistance needs to be focused, results-oriented and tailored to the priority development needs of the countries concerned. It has to be designed to bring a tangible and speedy impact on the lives of ordinary people and to help them escape the trap of poverty and live in dignity, free from want. Accountability, oversight, management performance and transparency of the Secretariat must be brought to a new level of efficiency, professionalism and ethical conduct on a par with the best corporate governance practices.

Mongolia supports the idea of empowering the Secretary-General, the chief administrative officer of the United Nations, with greater authority and flexibility in administering the work of the Organization in line with the Charter's provisions. All too often, sound management reforms proposed by the Secretary-General have been stalled by us, the Member States.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me voice Mongolia's confidence that we collectively will succeed in reforming our world Organization, and the renewed and reinvigorated United Nations will be better equipped to address effectively the manifold challenges that lie ahead.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Cyril Svoboda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Svoboda (Czech Republic): Let me begin by congratulating Mr. Eliasson on his election to the

presidency. He is at the steering wheel of one of the most challenging sessions of the General Assembly in history — not only because it is the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization but mainly because of our agenda and the gravity of problems awaiting resolution. While thanking his able and devoted predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, I would like to wish the President every success in the coming months of hard and hopefully rewarding work.

The European Union invested a huge effort in the preparations for both the High-level Plenary Meeting and our current session, and the Czech Republic was an integral and active part of this process. We heard the statement of the European Union presidency a few days ago, and I have no intention of repeating it. Rather, let me present here several ideas and comments of a more general nature.

Millions of our fellow human beings in Africa and elsewhere are trapped in absolute poverty, with little or no access to education, medical and other services, and are deprived of a dignified existence. In their regions or in other parts of the world, fascinating technical achievements and thriving economies enable large numbers of people to enjoy an unprecedentedly high quality of life. Some may simply conclude that there are several distinct worlds on our planet. But while the gaps may still be widening, let us be sure that we all live in only one increasingly interconnected world. There is no way to separate the rich from the poor or to separate different ethnic groups. And the responsibility for our future is equally indivisible.

Moreover, we are repeatedly reminded that despite many advancements this world is still very fragile and vulnerable. What is the common feature of the 9/11, Bali, Madrid, Beslan, Baghdad or London terrorist attacks; floods in China or in Central Europe in 2002 and again in 2005; drought in parts of Africa; the Indian Ocean tsunami; and devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico? They all expose in their own way the vulnerability and fragility of our civilization.

Developed or developing, big or small, we continue to be vulnerable to the forces of nature as well as the forces of evil. Fortunately, the worst of situations tends to awaken the best in human character: after any such disaster or terrorist attack we have seen raising waves of solidarity on a global scale, we have seen renewed determination to fight the evil.

It is our duty to tap this positive energy. Although no one will ever achieve 100 per cent security, much can be done by deepening our cooperation, strengthening preventive measures, stepping up our efforts in combating terrorism, enhancing the mechanisms of development and humanitarian aid and, in the long run, simply fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals. If reformed and mandated, the United Nations can play a central role in this process.

Last year, many of us spoke of reform, and reform has indeed been one of the most frequently used words since then. There was much expectation in the air, much sincere effort to bring about change, as well as many brilliant contributions to the debate: the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, the final report of the United Nations Millennium Project "Investing in Development" (the Sachs report) and the Secretary-General's report "In Larger Freedom".

After several rounds of discussion, we could say we knew the diagnosis and could prescribe the necessary medication, hoping that the summit would add the most needed ingredients: the political will and the means of delivery.

So, was the summit a success or a failure? I tend to view its results, the outcome document, with sober optimism. The challenge was enormous: to bring together development, security and human rights and to craft a new delicate balance among the elements that constitute our global agenda. In my view, the summit managed — and this could be its major achievement — to set the tone, to set at least rough parameters of a new equation, the fine-tuning of the details being left for the coming months. We have guidance for further talks on assistance and relief for developing countries. We have a prospect of increasing development aid, including from the Czech Republic.

At the summit, we agreed that the human rights machinery needed strengthening and redesigning. Indeed, it was probably the first time at such a major event that human rights was placed on an equal footing with issues such as development and security. But many pieces of the puzzle have yet to be put in place.

In shaping the future Human Rights Council, we have to make sure that the progressive features and experience of the Human Rights Commission are not lost, while avoiding its weaknesses and what specifically did not work, securing cooperation from

countries such as Belarus, Cuba, Myanmar, Zimbabwe and others which repeatedly failed to respond adequately to the international community's concerns about human rights.

Moreover, the summit reinforced our commitment to join forces in fighting terrorism, made the groundbreaking decision to create the Peacebuilding Commission and endorsed the twin concepts of responsibility to protect and human security — all of which bring new hope to those facing lawlessness and oppression and which extend existing standards of peace and security.

But there are also areas where the summit failed: among others, disarmament and non-proliferation and, most notably, the expansion of the Security Council. Our reform mission remains unfinished, but must continue.

If it is to face up to new challenges and tasks, the Secretariat must be strong and healthy. It has to undergo profound reform. The need for such a reform is further underlined by the recent findings of the Volcker report. I welcome the emphasis that the summit put on United Nations management and its call for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

All in all, the summit took many steps in the right direction, shaping our vision and sharpening our tools. But there is another, hidden part of the story. Do all of us really want the United Nations to grow stronger and more efficient? Will a better, reformed — and truly universal — United Nations be able to spare the world all of its troubles? Will it be able to find solutions to every conflict and bring lasting peace to every notorious hot spot, including the Balkans, the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan and a number of places in Africa? Will it be able to prevent millions of people from dying from hunger and diseases such as HIV/AIDS? Will it be strong enough to guarantee and promote democracy and human rights?

There is hope, and there is a chance — but the answer depends on us. I can assure the Assembly that the Czech Republic is ready to carry out its part of the assignment, including in the Security Council if elected for the period 2008-2009.

The President: I now give the floor to The Honourable Sam Kutesa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Kutesa (Uganda): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the General Assembly at this important session, at which we pledge our full cooperation. I also wish to thank your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for having conducted the proceedings of the fifty-ninth session so efficiently and for having spearheaded the vital negotiations on the outcome document adopted by the summit.

I must also express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership, especially his efforts to reform the United Nations so as to make it more responsive to the dynamics and demands of the current world.

The founding fathers of the United Nations dreamed of an organization that would be able, in the words of the Charter, to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. It was in pursuit of that dream that the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). That was a milestone in the realization of one of the purposes and principles of the Charter — to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and to be the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining those common ends.

A great deal has been done since the Millennium Summit in 2000, at both national and international levels, to attain the objectives that we set ourselves in the MDGs. Asia and Latin America have progressed well, while Oceania and Africa have not been quite as successful. On the whole, Africa's performance has shown mixed results. Some regions, especially in North Africa, have registered positive achievements, while others have fared negatively.

In a globalized world, the future and welfare of all are interlinked. Poverty in one part of the world threatens peace and security globally. Equally, an epidemic in a remote village in Africa threatens the health of the prosperous individual in New York. In essence, we all share a common fate. The international community has therefore a self-interested obligation to help Africa emerge from its current predicament. Let the wealth of some enhance the welfare of all.

Uganda hopes that the World Summit Outcome resolution will be more than a real commitment to

improving the welfare of the world's poor and to making the United Nations the vanguard for the aspirations of all. We hope that it will not suffer the fate of the commitments that preceded it.

Peace and security is a prerequisite for development. One of the reasons why Africa has failed to register substantial achievements with regard to the MDGs is lack of stability, peace and security. Conflicts, wars and civil strife afflicting the continent have acted as disincentives to development. The 1885 Berlin Conference split Africa up, without due regard to the long-term interests of the African peoples. The Great Lakes region found itself at the confluence of all the colonial Powers. That confluence created a political and social situation that has, over the years, proved difficult to manage. It is a complex situation, with both positive and negative tendencies. The cold war further exacerbated the situation as the East battled the West for influence. Indeed, former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold lost his life in the context of that explosive political mix.

As Africa struggles to set its house in order, Uganda has identified four main causes of conflict on the continent which negative forces have exploited for their own ends. They include parasitic vested interests; superficiality and obscurantism in identifying and dealing with those parasitic interests and their effects on a particular country or group of countries; weak and disoriented local leadership; and, finally, the pre-industrial characteristics of Africa.

Those are the core causes of conflict, although there are others. Paying clear and careful attention to them could provide a vital springboard from which long-term solutions could be found.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region in general is caused by a combination of those factors. Those with the most to lose in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are marginalized, while real issues of statecraft have been pushed to the periphery. No attention is being given to creating institutions and infrastructure that can sustain the State.

The integration of armed factions into one single national armed force is half-hearted. How can a State exist without the minimum pillars of support, such as an army capable of defending its territorial integrity?

The view that justice should precede integration is wrong, in our opinion. While justice is important, it is Uganda's belief that it should not take precedence over the integration of armed groups. We should integrate all factions, and then seek to punish those that are guilty of any offences later. Uganda advocates the concept of provisional immunity or *immunité provisoire*, as it is referred to in Burundi. On the other hand, equal attention needs to be given to issues of development, rehabilitation and the recovery of the economy. A growing economy is necessary for sustainable peace. What we are witnessing today is a rush to elections and political agendas without due regard being given to the institutions and infrastructure necessary for the long-term sustainability of peace. We have travelled this road before, with disastrous consequences. Let the immediate past of the continent be a guiding lesson for all of us.

The Lusaka peace accord provided a strong mechanism enabling the region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to play complementary roles in the peace process. Unfortunately, it has been abandoned. The central problem of negative forces, which the agreement recognized, has been put on the back burner. For over five years, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has made no significant effort to ensure the demobilization and disarmament of those groups, thus leaving in place the seeds of future conflict. We are, however, hopeful that our efforts, both at the bilateral level and in the Tripartite Commission, which is composed of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the participation of Burundi, will iron out those problems and allow our region to attain peace and stability.

For some time now, the situation in Burundi has been a real concern to the Great Lakes region and to the international community at large. The destruction and loss of life that took place spurred the regional States, together with South Africa, to undertake and spearhead a peace initiative. It was a long and arduous process. With the support of the United Nations and the international community, signs of success are today evident.

In the past few months, the people of Burundi elected their leaders in local, parliamentary and, finally, presidential elections. They look to the future with hope. Uganda welcomes His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, the new President of Burundi,

and we look forward to working with him to consolidate peace in the region. The international community and the United Nations have an obligation to make peace sustainable. Reconstruction, rehabilitation and development will be necessary. We hope that due attention is given to institutional capacity-building so that Burundi does not relapse into the fratricidal anarchy that had been its bane over the past decade.

After two decades of conflict in southern Sudan, the people of the Sudan, led by the Government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A), signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement earlier this year. The guns are silent, and the long-tortured people of southern Sudan are now enjoying some peace. It is unfortunate that the late John Garang passed away at a time when implementation of the Agreement was in its early stages. We are confident that given the commitment of both the Government of the Sudan and SPLM the peace agreement will hold and will be comprehensively implemented. We are also confident that the Sudan is headed for a peaceful future. We hope that other conflicts, such as that in Darfur, will be peacefully resolved using the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as an inspiration and a model.

The signature and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan has led to increased optimism about peace in northern Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a terrorist group that has long maimed, kidnapped and terrorized the civilian population of northern Uganda, for a long time had sanctuary in southern Sudan, from where it launched its terrorist activities. With the cooperation of the Sudanese Government, including SPLA/SPLM in the south, these terrorists are being flushed out from southern Sudan. Uganda's strategy of peace negotiations combined with maximum military pressure has significantly reduced the LRA's capacity to commit evil. However, as peace returns to the region, we need international cooperation and assistance to supplement the Government of Uganda's post-conflict humanitarian, rehabilitation and development programme, which is already under way in northern Uganda.

Somalia has been in a state of anarchy for more than a decade and a half. Peace efforts by the international community and the United Nations have been anything but timid. A sense of frustration on the part of the United Nations has led to resignation and despair, thus condemning the Somali people to a state of bondage and being held hostage by the warlords.

It is in this void that the regional States, under the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), took on the mantle of negotiating peace and re-establishing order. Anarchy is contagious. We cannot feel safe in a situation pregnant with arms trafficking, religious extremism, the dumping of radioactive waste and the potential for breeding terrorists in the region. These are realistic threats, and IGAD cannot ignore them. The international community — and, most especially, the members of the Security Council — should not be deluded by geographical distance. A potential threat to international peace truly exists in Somalia.

It is in view of these current and latent threats that the members of IGAD took upon themselves to negotiate with Somalia for peace. Over a period of two years, we went through a very laborious and sometimes frustrating negotiating process until agreement was reached on formation of a Government of national unity last year. At the end of the process, we expected the Security Council to join us in the pursuit of peace. We expected that all efforts would be geared towards creating the necessary legal and political atmosphere to facilitate the realization of peace for the long-suffering people of Somalia.

We were, however, deeply disappointed when the Council, in its wisdom, acted otherwise, leaving the region and, most important, the Somali people to their fate. The decision to uphold the arms embargo and to reject even its partial lifting denied the region a chance to implement the peace process to its logical end. We hope that it is not too late for the Council to evaluate and review its position.

Let me briefly make some comments on the proposed reform of the United Nations. The institution we have today was conceived and created 60 years ago. The sense of triumphalism of the victors in the Second World War, the anguish of the vanquished and the assumed indifference of the colonial peoples, especially in Africa, formed the background to the run-up to the creation of the United Nations.

The institution that emerged reflected those realities. Nowhere within the United Nations, was this more apparent than in the Security Council. The victors reserved for themselves the right to determine the

destiny of others. This was done without due regard for the interests of those that the decisions were to affect most. Today, the situation has dramatically changed. Colonial peoples have gained independence, and the international power structure has changed.

Decisions of the Security Council need wider support diplomatically, financially and militarily in order to be implemented. It has, therefore, become an imperative to reform the Security Council and make it more representative and reflective of the realities of today's world.

In Africa, where most Security Council mandated operations take place, we believe that it is time for the continent, composed of 53 States, to have a real say in how those operations are formulated and implemented. Today, Africa is the only continent that has no representation at the real decision-making level of the Council. It is for these reasons that we demand that the continent be given two permanent seats with veto and two additional non-permanent seats. A Council thus composed will be more democratic and credible and will have its decisions more widely accepted.

While the dream of the founding fathers of the United Nations was to save succeeding generations form the scourge of war, conflicts remain a reality in today's world. For 60 years, the United Nations has failed to live up to this expectation. Uganda, therefore, welcomes the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office. We hope that the 31 December 2005 deadline will be met in order to enable those vital bodies help the United Nations effectively address conflict and make peace more sustainable.

In the same vain, we support the establishment of the Democracy Fund, which should be used to support countries' home-grown institutions and not as a mechanism to import foreign brands of democracy.

My delegation is cognizant of the primary responsibility of States to protect their own people. In the event of failure, the international community has a responsibility to protect in order to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing. However, this responsibility should be clearly defined and its exercise should have the prior authorization of the Security Council.

We believe that the commitment of our leaders to support a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations will help expand the capacity of the international community to handle the old and new challenges facing the world. Indeed, regional organizations that have a capacity for prevention of armed conflict or peacekeeping should use it to enhance the United Nations in this field.

The existing Commission on Human Rights has been deficient in its performance over the years. We believe that it is time to create an independent institution with an effective and clear mandate to handle human rights. The proposal to create a Human Rights Council is timely. We hope that all the necessary details will be agreed upon so that this Council can be launched.

In conclusion, allow me to restate Uganda's commitment to the ideals and principles of the United Nations. The Organization has served us relatively well over the years. It is capable of serving us even better and achieving the dreams and ideals emanated by the framers of the Charter 60 years ago. This can happen only if we take the bold step of adopting the far-reaching, innovative reforms proposed by the Secretary-General and if we fully implement the outcome document.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Mr. Kasuri (Pakistan): Let me congratulate the President of the current session and former President Jean Ping for the success of the historic sixtieth anniversary summit. We admire the dedication and skill with which President Ping conducted the preparations for the summit. We thank the Secretary-General for his initiative to convene the summit and his numerous constructive ideas to advance development and United Nations reform.

Pakistan supported adoption of the outcome document. It reflects the existing consensus on a range of issues. However, like many others, we are disappointed with the results. We could have achieved more, perhaps, if the agenda were not so extensive, if Security Council reform had not sapped energy from the preparatory process, and if the negotiations on the document had been commenced earlier.

Development was, and remains, of the highest priority for the vast majority of Member States. The summit was to focus on fulfilment of the

internationally agreed development goals. There are welcome recommendations on official development assistance (ODA) targets, debt relief, enhancing and improving aid and addressing the special needs of Africa; but we did not advance very much on trade, investment flows and global governance.

However, we can recover lost ground and lost time on development through a focused and more determined implementation process. The objective must be accorded first priority. Fortunately, agreement exists already on development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The developing countries are adopting national strategies to achieve those goals. Development partners must now demonstrate the political will to fully support the national strategies and to accept greater equity in the international trade and financial systems.

We must quickly put in place an effective mechanism to promote and monitor the implementation of the goals and agreements on development. Adequate resources must be provided for the purpose.

The summit emphasized the role of the Economic and Social Council in promoting policy dialogue, development cooperation, post-conflict development and coordination within the United Nations system. Pakistan believes that the Economic and Social Council should now serve as the central forum for follow-up and implementation of the development commitments made at the summit. In this regard, we would propose that the model developed for tracking tsunami aid — the so-called DAD (Development Assistance Database) system — be replicated to assess the status of implementation of the agreed development goals. Pakistan has also offered to convene a high-level informal meeting of members of the Economic and Social Council and other stakeholders towards the end of this year to review the steps taken to advance the implementation of the development goals and decide on further measures.

The widely recognized interlinkage between peace and development has now been institutionalized with the decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission. Pakistan is proud that the Peacebuilding Commission evolved from the concept of ad hoc composite committees that we introduced in 2003. As a major troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations and, in particular, through our engagement in complex missions, such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo [illegible] expertise to [illegible] Pakistan has a wealth of experience and [illegible] Commission [illegible] contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We shall take part actively in the discussions [illegible] finalize [illegible] tho be held in the General Assembly to commencem[illegible] details and modalities for the [illegible]nt of the Commission's work.

Terrorism [illegible] collective rem[illegible] is a global menace and requires a terrorism. Response. Pakistan has been a major target of war against [illegible] are at the forefront of the international Government terrorism. At home, the Pakistan term measures instituted a number of short- and long-These include[illegible] to eliminate terrorism and extremism. [illegible] detention etc[illegible] banning extremist organizations and material, hat[illegible] extremists, crackdowns against hate registration [illegible]ing the misuse of religious institutions, illiteracy and[illegible]nd reform of the madrassas and fighting [illegible]

The su[illegible] poverty [illegible] comprehensiv[illegible]rrorism has endorsed the elaboration of a set up an ac[illegible] strategy against terrorism. We should strategy. A d[illegible] hoc working group to elaborate this terrorism, w[illegible]comprehensive strategy should oppose groups or [illegible] Wherever and by whomever — individuals, [illegible] it does not[illegible]tes. No strategy can be comprehensive if extremism, [illegible]address the factors that contribute to injustice, for[illegible]including poverty, political and economic self-determinat[illegible]ion occupation and denial of the right to [illegible]

Dialogu[illegible]ation [illegible] and religious[illegible]nc and understanding between civilizations a[illegible] comprehen[illegible]should also be an essential component of several extensive strategy on terrorism. There are that can be [illegible]orthy and mutually reinforcing initiatives national activ[illegible]coalesced to generate international and strategy of "[illegible]m. These include President Musharraf's simultaneous[illegible]enlightened moderation", which seeks to world and [illegible]ly promote internal reform in the Islamic community [illegible]he active support of the international address this[illegible] help resolve political disputes and challenges of [illegible] socio-economic and development [illegible]the Islamic world.

The fai[illegible] [illegible] and non-proliferation to achieve agreement on disarmament the deep differences in the outcome document reflects This is dangerous[illegible]ences that exist among Member States regions of [illegible]ross for peace and stability, especially in community [illegible]lesson. It is time for the international not just within the entire United Nations membership, [illegible]connection [illegible]ry self-selected States, to promote a new [illegible]n disarmament and non-proliferation

through the Conference on Disarmament or a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

The summit also could not achieve full consensus on how to ensure the effective promotion of human rights that, along with "peace and development", is the third pillar of United Nations reform. We should build on the agreement reached to evolve a full consensus. Pakistan will join in creating a new and representative Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Its mandate and methods must promote cooperation rather than confrontation. We must also improve and rationalize the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, the host of special mechanisms that exist on the subject and the participation of civil society in the work of the United Nations on human rights. We feel that this exercise of reform should be entrusted to a working group in Geneva.

We have committed ourselves to strengthening the United Nations and making it more effective, efficient, democratic and accountable. Our pledge to reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly should be given real meaning. The Assembly's role and mandate should be preserved from encroachment, especially by the Security Council. It is the General Assembly that should ensure the follow-up of the summit's decisions.

In its capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council, Pakistan will work closely with member States to implement the proposed enhanced role of the Council with adjustments to the Council's organization, agenda and working methods.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but it lacks transparency and democracy. It is neither fully representative nor accountable to the general membership. The rationale for its reform is, therefore, clear. The Council should be enlarged by adding 10 additional non-permanent members to reflect the entire spectrum of the United Nations membership. It could allow immediate re-election to enable major countries to seek more frequent membership of the Council, but it should not add to inequality by inducting new permanent members. That would alienate many important countries, divide and weaken the United Nations and further reduce the Council's credibility and legitimacy.

The proposal of Uniting for Consensus is equitable, fair and democratic. It has the flexibility to accommodate the positions and aspirations of all countries and regional and political groupings, including those of Africa. It will increase the representation of the general membership in the Security Council. It will enhance the stature of the General Assembly by making the Council more accountable to the general membership. We are ready to continue efforts — in any open and transparent format, including that of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group — to reach consensus on Security Council reform.

Pakistan is gratified that the summit reaffirmed the central values and principles of the United Nations and acknowledged that the range of threats we face requires our urgent, collective and more determined response. It also acknowledged that many threats are interdependent. We welcome the renewed emphasis on the peaceful settlement of disputes and on the Charter's strict constraints on the use of force. It is befitting that we are observing the International Day of Peace today.

Pakistan believes that while dealing with new threats, such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the United Nations must continue to accord priority to addressing and resolving the numerous disputes and conflicts that afflict so many regions of our world.

In Africa, there is a new dynamic of regional ownership and international engagement and partnership in addressing conflicts and complex crises. Progress is, however, mixed. Relative improvements in Sierra Leone and Liberia are in contrast with numerous challenges in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. We are heartened by the prospects of peace in the Sudan. Somalia, on the other hand, still awaits the international attention and support needed to restore security and consolidate the painful gains in the peace process. Pakistan will continue to contribute to United Nations and international efforts for the restoration of peace and stability in Africa.

The early resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and a two-State solution would usher in an era of peace and stability in the Middle East. We have welcomed Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza, and we trust that it will be followed by withdrawal from the

West Bank, leading to the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State. Pakistan will do whatever it can to promote durable peace in the Middle East. That would help considerably to eliminate the conditions that encourage extremism and terrorism.

Pakistan also hopes for the early restoration of peace and security in Iraq. We should encourage a democratic consensus among its peoples and regions that preserves Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, as well as the strengthening of its national capability to preserve security by combating violence and terrorism.

Afghanistan has completed another milestone with the successful holding of parliamentary elections. The international community must remain fully engaged to help Afghanistan overcome the remaining challenges. Pakistan is committed, bilaterally and multilaterally, to support efforts for peace, security, development and reconstruction in Afghanistan. We wish to see the 3 million Afghan refugees whom we still host return to their homes in safety and honour.

There should be no self-serving questions or quibbling about Pakistan's commitment and contribution to peace and security in Afghanistan, which are in Pakistan's own best interest. Pakistan is actively engaged in halting illegal cross-border movement and containing the threat posed by the Taliban and Al-Qaida, including through the Pakistan-Afghanistan-United States Tripartite Commission. Pakistan's military presence along the border far exceeds the combined strength of the national and international military presence in Afghanistan. We recently proposed partial fencing of the border in limited areas to minimize the chances for illegal movements. We hope that that will be accepted and implemented in the spirit in which it was offered.

Relations between India and Pakistan are improving. There is new hope for peace and cooperation in South Asia. We must also give that hope to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their legitimate quest for self-determination. In his address to the summit on 14 September, President Musharraf said that Pakistan and India must not remain trapped by hate and history in a cycle of confrontation and conflict. To prevent that from happening, it is essential to find a just solution to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, acceptable to Pakistan, India and, above all, the people of Kashmir. On the same day, the President met with the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, in New York to further advance the ongoing composite dialogue between our two countries.

Peace in our neighbourhood will also provide a fillip to the efforts being undertaken by Pakistan for rapid and equitable socio-economic development. We share the emphasis placed by the summit on the role of national policies and development strategies in the achievement of sustainable development. The Government has taken a series of actions to transform Pakistan into a modern, dynamic, progressive and democratic Islamic State. Our policies have produced visible results: macroeconomic stability, 8.4 per cent growth in gross domestic product last year, a reduced fiscal deficit and growing export earnings, external remittances and investment. The major focus of our Government now is to accelerate the transfer of economic benefits to the people of Pakistan. We are confident that we will achieve all the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

Pakistan is also succeeding against terrorism and extremism. It is on the path to sustainable democracy. Our people have been empowered from the grass-roots level up. That includes guaranteed 30 per cent representation of women at all levels. Minorities have been brought into the mainstream. We are determined to sustain those positive trends in our national development. At the same time, we are working to forge close economic partnerships in the region and beyond.

It is in the same spirit of constructive engagement that Pakistan wishes to pursue cooperative multilateralism and to strengthen the United Nations — this unique forum that is indispensable, in our interdependent world, for all States, large or small, powerful or weak.

Pakistan participated actively in, and contributed constructively to, the preparation of the summit and its outcome. We are committed to furthering the reform process in the follow-up to the summit's decisions. We look forward to working closely with all other Member States and would like to assure the Assembly of our full cooperation in this historic endeavour.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ignacio Walker, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile.

Mr. Walker (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to commend the President, and the other

members of the Bureau on their election. We assure them of our full willingness to cooperate in the tasks facing us.

We arrived at this session of the General Assembly with the same conviction and resolve that we had 60 years ago. We still believe that this is the place where we can collectively promote human rights, development, solidarity and peace. The political agreement reached last week, although it did not meet all our expectations, enables us to embark on the path towards comprehensive and balanced renewal of the United Nations system. We have the necessary mandates to begin renewal during this session. That must be possible, because our interest is the interest of humanity.

We have here an exceptional opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and to build it within the genuine framework of international coexistence. Multilateralism is the very cornerstone of our foreign policy. In the multilateral system, negotiation and consensus are the tools to create international regimes that promote globalization in a legitimate and effective manner. The United Nations is a unique forum in that process, and we must strengthen it in order to achieve those goals. Hence, the urgent need to implement United Nations reform.

We believe that multilateralism can furnish us both with more and better instruments to allow every country, large or small, to participate in the elaboration of rules and in the allocation of the benefits of globalization. We are convinced that globalization is more of an opportunity than a threat. For that reason we must assure the management of globalization, which can be achieved only through institutions that conform to clear, stable and equitable rules of the game within the context of international law. Economic forces do not act in a political vacuum, which is why we need both a new architecture and new working methods in the United Nations system.

It is in that spirit that Chile has taken an active part in various meetings concerned with the revitalization of the United Nations, promoting comprehensive reform in the major areas of development, security, democracy and human rights. I would like to touch briefly on each of those areas.

Protection of human rights is, in our opinion, the central issue of globalization and a continuing preoccupation in the recent history of Chile and Latin America. That history has been written by the citizens and their struggles to restore respect for the dignity and rights of the individual.

Indeed, human rights are a legitimate concern of the international community. Examination of human rights issues by the United Nations does not constitute undue interference. On the contrary, it is the exercise of a shared responsibility, from a standpoint of cooperation and not of confrontation. When States are unable or unwilling to act, the Organization cannot remain indifferent in the face of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The responsibility to protect is an international moral obligation that we cannot shirk.

For Chile, the decision to establish the Human Rights Council is a significant step towards universal protection of human rights. We hope that before the end of the session, its characteristics, including its status as a permanent organ, will have been defined. The election of its members by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly, as we propose, will strengthen that organ's legitimacy.

Comprehensive reporting by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner would also enhance the credibility of the multilateral human rights system. In order to avoid the politicization and selectivity that are harming United Nations human rights work, a peer review system would promote greater cooperation, with all countries subject to objective evaluations — particularly for those that aspire to seats on the Human Rights Council.

Democratic values are cross-cutting: they apply to the citizens who participate in the life of a community, they underlie the organization of government and public institutions, and they are also the linchpin of international coexistence. Democratic values are a priority on the multilateral agenda and should be reflected in the active commitment of Member States to promote and defend democracy. It was that interest that has motivated Chile's efforts within the Community of Democracies.

While some peoples and regions are part of global society and participate in decision-making and in the distribution of global output, others are marginalized and lack access to those benefits. That situation raises important questions about democratic participation. It is therefore essential, if we wish to consolidate democracy in the world, to move

decisively to eliminate inequality and to abolish exclusion. A better quality of democracy is linked to social integration and poverty relief.

In that connection, the Millennium Development Goals represent a global commitment to fundamental rights, with social underpinnings, that must be achieved in order to effectively consolidate democracy and uproot moral indifference towards the unprotected of the world.

The deepening of democracy must aim at institutional capacity-building in order to meet the demands of society in an effective and transparent manner. We have been working along those lines in the Organization of American States, in particular through the Inter-American Democratic Charter, seeking formulas and instruments to improve democratic governance. Chile believes that that is an area in which there should be close cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The reaffirmation of democracy as a universal value by heads of State and Government in the outcome document represents concrete progress in the consolidation of a new international regime for the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

The creation of the United Nations Democracy Fund gives us a new forum for cooperation to help strengthen and consolidate democracy around the world. In April, 108 countries from all continents agreed on the "Santiago commitment: Cooperating for Democracy", which contains guidelines for action.

We have fully endorsed the concept of multidimensional security in order to meet old and new threats. Indeed, the incorporation of the concept of human security at the United Nations is an important contribution to the process of renewal. The definition to be formulated by the General Assembly should incorporate the progress achieved by the Human Security Network, in which Chile has actively participated from the outset.

We were greatly discouraged that no agreement was reached to include the topic of disarmament and non-proliferation in the reform process. That is a topic that must not be dropped from the United Nations agenda. We therefore supported the Norwegian initiative, which succeeded in bridging the gap between opposing positions. Unfortunately, despite receiving the support of nearly 80 countries, the initiative did not find a place in the outcome document. We will continue to work for its adoption.

In addition, we are convinced that terrorism must be tackled through a global and sustained strategy, with the cooperation of all States and international and regional organizations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and with full respect for human rights. We must therefore channel our strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations into the political will to conclude an international convention against terrorism before the end of the session.

The decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission is one of the major successes of the reform agenda, as it will enable the Organization to provide an institutional and integrated response in post-conflict situations. United Nations activities should not cease as soon as a crisis ends but — to build a durable peace — should continue until institutions are rebuilt and peaceful coexistence is restored.

As Latin Americans, and aware of our global responsibilities, we are actively participating in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. We are convinced that that joint commitment, which is strongly regional in nature in Latin America and the Caribbean, has been helpful in enabling Haiti to recover its ability to control its own destiny. This will undoubtedly require the continuing presence of the international community. The elections are an important step, which Haiti should take on schedule. Voting, however, is only the basis for self-determination: we must continue helping to create the prerequisites for a worthier future for the Haitian people. Moreover, Haiti could be the first trial run for the Peacebuilding Commission.

Overcoming poverty, hunger and social inequality is the great challenge facing our peoples today. Economic development with equity is essential in order to achieve a world truly at peace and to guarantee individual rights and stable democracies.

A few days ago, heads of State or Government reviewed the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000. Our country met over one third of the Goals and hope to achieve them all by 2015.

In order to achieve economic development with equity, each country has a responsibility to be assumed domestically and tasks to be performed internationally. In this connection, it is essential to work to implement the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, so that in its domestic efforts each country can enjoy the benefits of an international economic environment facilitating poverty relief and permitting sustained development.

We were among the sponsors of the Action against Hunger and Poverty, which seeks to devise innovative financing arrangements to combat this problem within the framework of the international community's endeavours to attain the Millennium Development Goals. We need responses now, and the Action is a definite option recognized in the Summit Outcome.

Chile considers it essential to bolster overall efforts to liberalize international trade for the exports of developing countries and to achieve stable financial flows to their economies. We urge the speedy conclusion of the Doha round, to which we are committed, and a remodelling of the international financial architecture to promote international conditions favourable to the sustained growth of the developing countries and to the elimination of poverty. Development, security and human rights for all are three interdependent concepts that dominate our existence as societies and that must be adequately reflected in a comprehensive reform process. We have embarked on the decisive stage of the road to renewal; we are all responsible for reaching the end.

We must make progress towards consensus on Security Council reform so that that organ can more democratically represent the new realities of the twenty-first century.

It is also essential to renew the Secretariat's managerial capacity to administer effective and responsibly the resources that we all contribute in order to achieve the purposes of the United Nations. Over and above the legitimate differences that are part of the richness of our diversity, we must build universal agreements reflecting common concerns to ensure the dignity of peoples and the right to live in a more secure world.

Let me conclude by saying that this session of the General Assembly is a historic opportunity to promote change. If we do not implement the agreements achieved, hiding behind national interests or narrow cultural visions, we shall be failing to respond to the feelings and expectations of millions of human beings who aspire to understanding among civilizations, a global alliance for development and a reaffirmation of the underlying values of the United Nations. Let us not miss this opportunity. If we do not act collectively today, tomorrow may be too late.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Teodor Baconschi, Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Baconschi (Romania) (*spoke in French*): I would like to add Romania's voice to those who have warmly congratulated His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election to the important position of President of the General Assembly. We wish him every success and assure him of our full support.

For Romania, the political debates at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly have special significance; during this session, we shall celebrate 50 years of presence and active participation in the common efforts of the United Nations for peace, security and sustainable development, to help populations in distress and to promote human rights. It is uncontestable that the present international situation requires not only that we take a hard, critical look at reality but also that we have the strength to take responsible decisions and strong measures, both politically and at the institutional level, to ensure that the United Nations will be capable of meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century and that it will continue to play an important role in the service of the greater good.

(*spoke in English*)

Romania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered at the 9th plenary meeting by Foreign Secretary Jack Straw of Great Britain on behalf of the European Union. In my address I will, therefore, only complement the key points already made there on the challenges of reform. We can be proud of where the Union stands today on the global scene and of its United Nations record.

By no means is this just another general debate at the start of a new session of the General Assembly. We are called upon to rise to the responsibility enunciated at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General

Assembly, which preceded these debates. There, heads of State or Government committed all of us, through the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), to continue the efforts to reform our Organization. It is now in our hands to implement our leaders' decisions and make the most of them.

Against this backdrop, I wish to commend Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for the outstanding work he has done over the past few months, together with his facilitators, and for the way he conducted the negotiations. It was a difficult process, but I believe that we have a document with which we can be satisfied. Many aspects still need further elaboration, but the General Assembly is ready to work on them under the skilful guidance of the current President, Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The United Nations should continue to accomplish multilayered objectives and to function as a complex, effective organization. That is the spirit of the deliberations conducted by our heads of State or Government and of the decisions they took.

Much thus remains to be done in relation to the mandate and responsibilities of the First Committee. Debates on international security are still dependent on arrangements put in place during the cold war. Unfortunately, almost all multilateral negotiating forums seem complacent in their conservatism. Yet we all agree that, given those premises, it is difficult to advance the political dialogue and to set new priorities.

We need a new dynamic, anchored in a genuine reform process. It has to be tailored to respond effectively to the most ominous threats to international peace and security: terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has to be truly relevant to our needs and has to produce equal dividends for all in a system based on the concept of collective security.

Success in the area of development calls for broad solidarity in international economic relations. Romania has gradually increased its contribution towards resolving global development issues. And accession to the European Union will make Romania a member of the world's largest donor community. The United Nations must develop and strengthen its capacity to effectively protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, by upholding the concept of a "responsibility to protect", which calls for an international response in cases where a State is unable or unwilling to discharge its primary function of protecting the life, property and fundamental rights of its own citizens.

This imperative is convincingly illustrated by the fact that, over the past 15 years, we have witnessed how a number of internal conflicts, which frequently had started as separatist movements, have evolved to achieve "frozen conflict" status. These conflicts have become breeding grounds for egregious violations of human rights and abuses, targeting the most vulnerable categories, such as women, children and persons belonging to various minorities.

It serves no purpose to debate an ambitious policy agenda unless we have an effective United Nations system adapted to the new realities of a changing world. Years after the end of the cold war, the United Nations is still struggling to make the transition from an organization characterized by ideological differences to one actively responding to pressing operational challenges. Institutional change is an absolute prerequisite for successful policy results.

One of the main problems besetting the Organization could, unfortunately, end up by being perpetuated — that is, increasingly high expectations and demands, without adequate resources and appropriate managerial tools.

At a time when some are calling into question the relevance of our Organization and when we have had to cope recently with a succession of revelations about mismanagement, we, the Secretariat and Member States together, need to act resolutely to ensure the efficiency and credibility of the United Nations by improving administrative performance, establishing viable mechanisms for the responsibility and accountability of the Secretariat, strengthening audit and oversight functions and endowing the Secretary-General with the authority and flexibility needed to manage effectively the mandates entrusted to him by the membership.

For Romania, like other United Nations Members, the Security Council has continued to be the body that monitors international relations with regard to critical issues that pose a threat to regional and global peace. It is highly commendable that the Security Council has assumed the leading role in establishing early warning and resolve as the cornerstones of the United Nations and the

international community's approach to the full range of new threats to international peace and security.

With over 2,000 peacekeepers on duty around the world, Romania is a major contributor and a significant investor in a wide range of United Nations-mandated and United Nations-authorized operations; we therefore have a very high stake in their successful outcome.

Romania's stance has consistently been that protection against security threats means more than just taking a stand at one's own border; we have to go where those challenges originate and approach them with resolute action and sustained investment. This is part of the rationale for Romania's joint endeavours with partners and allies in shouldering stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan. In both countries, elections are happening, following the tremendous dedication and painstaking efforts of, above all, the people of those countries, and also because of a steadily engaged international community. Romania is carrying her share of this burden all the way through the process.

Since 9/11, the international edifice, as well as our common values of peace and security, have been badly shaken by an unprecedented surge of terrorist activity. Romania was among the first countries to embark on efforts undertaken globally, as well as regionally, to combat this scourge. From that day on, we have constantly been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, on the ground and through our active participation in the process of shaping successive initiatives in different forums.

Furthermore, Romania has carried out her specific contribution to international counter-terrorism efforts as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council by assuming, inter alia, the chairmanship of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Romania has already advanced to the ratification stage of the 12 relevant international conventions adopted in this area and has transposed important parts of their provisions into its national legislation. I am proud to inform delegates that, on 14 September, my President signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 April 2005. Romania shares the European Union (EU) stand on the urgency of adopting of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Our crucial aim is to see the day when the international community is able to address each and every security challenge, no matter where, by better pooling existing resources and capabilities.

We were pleased to see recognition given in the Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) to the important contribution that regional organizations have made to peace and security.

The heads of State and Government expressed their support for a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the Charter. They resolved to expand this dimension of the new architecture of international peace and security through formalized agreements between the respective secretariats and, as appropriate, the involvement of regional organizations in the work of the Security Council.

Romania's particular experience in South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea area indicates that, in such cases as conflict management and in handling responses to transnational threats, regional action reinforced by meaningful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is decisive.

In the Balkans, the way in which the Kosovo issue will be addressed over the coming months is going to be crucial for the overall prospects for lasting stability, integration and prosperity for the whole region. The United Nations-led policy of standards in Kosovo has improved the situation in the region. The probability of violence and conflict is lower now than in the past, and we can start looking more confidently towards the future. However, the job is not yet done. Serbs and other ethnic communities in Kosovo still fear for their security and cannot live normal lives. There are also too many who are still waiting to return to their homes. Therefore, the comprehensive implementation of standards must continue, with thorough consideration given to securing and protecting normal relations between ethnic communities, as well as to the rights and freedoms of all people from Kosovo. No one will be able to refer realistically to stability and a political settlement in the region, as called for in United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), until such a foundation is achieved.

East of Romania, in the wider Black Sea area, development is hampered by a lack of overall security and stability. I am referring particularly to the situations of protracted conflict in the region, frozen in a state of uncertainty and disregard for international law and scrutiny. Besides their negative impact on development and political normalcy, these conflict areas also spread modern maladies in the neighbourhood, such as organized crime, illegal arms and drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and, not least, terrorism. The States of the region have to rise to meet these challenges together. They will not be able to do so without close cooperation. They need strong partners, strategic vision and a coherent, more comprehensive approach. It is clear that we have to find something better and more sustainable than trying to put these conflicts in the freezer for decades or years. In order to ensure the benefits of stability in the wider Black Sea area for all involved, the best way is to work towards making the logic of cooperation prevail.

In November, Romania will take up the chairmanship of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation pact. In this capacity, Romania will try to encourage all players in the region to think strategically in the common interest and overcome the burden of these protracted conflicts so as to maximize the region's economic and social potential. Also, given the world's interdependence, the States of the region need a United Nations that has closer links to regional structures and that can enhance, in turn, the effectiveness of joint action.

However we characterize the 2005 World Summit Outcome — as a blueprint or a road map — it is beyond a doubt that United Nations reform is still a work in progress. As far as Romania is concerned, we stand ready to join the presidency and all Member countries in endeavours to prepare the United Nations to meet the heavy demands placed on multilateral cooperation in the twenty-first century.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.